

DOUBLE BLIND TEST

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

A female GATE AGENT stands behind an airline counter scanning the floor for stragglers, one of whom is FISCHER, an ordinary-looking white man in his 40s. A few PASSENGERS on standby shift around anxiously. The Gate Agent makes an announcement over the intercom.

GATE AGENT

(Into microphone)

This will serve as the final boarding call for Delta flight 701, nonstop to Los Angeles, departing at seven o'clock from Gate B20. All ticketed passengers should proceed at once to the gate.

The moment the Gate Agent takes her thumb off the mike, TRACY gets in her face. Tracy, a tall, professional-looking woman in her early 30s wears a stylish black suit cut above the knee, and expensive heels that show off her toned legs.

TRACY

Listen. You've got to let me on that flight. I absolutely have to be in LA by noon. I'm mediating a dispute--

The Gate Agent turns away, disinterested in listening to the pleas of a latecomer.

GATE AGENT

--Impossible.

TRACY

I know you're deadheading at least one stewardess. Give me her seat and send her on the next flight.

The Gate Agent serves Tracy a look.

GATE AGENT

We don't call them stewardesses. They're flight attendants now.

Tracy glowers at the Gate Agent. Before tempers flare out of proportion, Fischer steps up to the counter. In heels, Tracy towers over him.

FISCHER

I don't mean to butt in, but I couldn't help overhearing your predicament, ma'am. I'd be happy to trade my seat with you for one on the next flight. I'm in no hurry.

TRACY

Really? Oh, my. That's very generous of you sir, but I wouldn't want you to miss your flight.

Tracy's expression makes it clear she intends to accept the offer in the end.

FISCHER

It really is no trouble, ma'am, no troub--

Tracy extends her hand which Fischer shakes.

TRACY

--Tracy Shepard.

FISCHER

OK, Tracy. No trouble at all. I know all about deadlines and business commitments and that kind of stuff. Take my place, I insist.

TRACY

Why, I can't thank you enough, Mr.--

FISCHER

--Cuttbate, Fischer Cuttbate. I go by Fish.

TRACY

Really? Fish? I mean, thank you so much... Fish.

Familiar with how rich people always get their way, the Gate Agent already has a boarding pass ready. Tracy walks to the jetway and just before disappearing waves to Fischer. Fischer waves back and walks toward an airport bar.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM/LA - DAY

Two groups of BUSINESSMEN mill around on opposite sides of a long conference table, talking, drinking coffee, eating bagels and donuts. Occasionally members of one group look with contempt at their counterparts across the table.

Tracy stands at the head of the conference table, checking her watch. RON, a big man suffering from acromegaly approaches Tracy.

RON

Ms. Shepard? I'm Ron Slomsky, CFO for NanoNano. We're glad you could make it out here on time.

TRACY

So am I. I almost missed the flight.

RON

That's what I heard.

TRACY

You did? Who told--

MATT - late-20s, handsome, stylish haircut, elegantly casual clothes - interrupts.

MATT

--Hi. Matt Blankenschein, CEO and founder of NanoNano. Can we get started?

TRACY

Let's go.

Matt addresses the crowd.

MATT

OK, everyone. Take a seat and try not to defile one another. You all know why we're here. This is Tracy Shepard. She's going to mediate the dispute between our companies. I'm Matt Blankenschein of NanoNano and this fine gentleman...

Matt gestures to FOGLE, a 60-year-old portly businessman sporting a comb-over.

MATT (CONT'D)

...is Sumner Fogle, Chief of PicoTech.

FOGLE nods to the rest of the Businessmen.

MATT (CONT'D)

You wanna say anything, Sumner?

FOGLE

Just this: Can we stop fucking around and get on with business?

TRACY

OK. Thanks for that input, Mr. Fogle.

Tracy addresses the audience.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Gentlemen, together you own 65 percent of the nanotechnology market. Congratulations. Of course, you want more. Greed is good, right? That's what they say in the movies.

(beat)

Let me tell you something: lust trumps greed. Greed clarifies, but lust compels. The greedy die with the gout, the lustful go out in the saddle. While you all sit here in this stuffy conference room, enjoying artisan bagels and fair-trade coffee, your competition - however meager - is chasing after your clients with a vicious hard-on. Lusting after your business.

The Businessmen look around at each other. Did she just say "hard-on"?

TRACY (CONT'D)

The world of nanotechnology is moving fast. You're losing share while you lock heads over patent violations, employee poaching, slimy marketing campaigns--

FOGLE

(Points at Matt)

--Just so you know, it was NanoNano that escalated this when they hacked into our database and stole the design specs--

BUSINESSMAN #1

--That's bullshit and you know it, Fogle! One of the assholes you fired posted those specs on Slashdot--

TRACY

--Come now, gentlemen, that's not how you're going to resolve--

BUSINESSMAN #1

--Yeah!? And what do you propose, Mrs. Mediator?

TRACY

Well, I could ask all of you to lay your cocks on the table and I'll choose the winner with a ruler... or you can shut up for a nanosecond and let me outline a plan that no one will like but no one will completely despise either.

Tracy scans the Businessmen sternly, leaning forward supported by both hands on the table. The Businessmen sit back ready to hear the proposal.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Good. Now let's look at the net present value of the damage each of you will inflict on each other absent a resolution.

Tracy presses a button, projecting a graph on a screen.

TRACY (CONT'D)

The y-axis is in millions of dollars.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM/LA - DAY (LATER)

Without sound Tracy lectures the Businessmen who then engage in a vigorous argument. Tracy balls them out but two of them begin jostling. Tracy shakes her head and smirks at the childish behavior. Ron separates them and fellow Businessmen lead the two jostling fools back to their seats. Tracy resumes her presentation. Fogle walks to a corner of the Conference Room and lights a cigarette. Matt follows him. The two begin a conversation.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM/LA - DAY (LATER)

Tracy sits near Matt who surreptitiously ogles her feet. Fogle fiddles with a pen.

TRACY

OK, so it all comes down to NanoNano licensing a couple patents as penance for...

(Quotes with fingers)

... "borrowing" the design specs from PicoTech. No more talk about stealing.

MATT

Listen. It's been a very long day. What's a couple patents between enemies. I'm not going to speak for Sumner, but he and I--

FOGLE

--You're gonna speak for me anyway, aren't you Blankenschein?

MATT

Me and Sumner are copacetic - right Summy?

Fogle grimaces, then relents.

FOGLE

Shit. Yeah. Copa-fucking-cetic.

TRACY

Fantastic. Shake on it.

After the two exchange a perfunctory handshake, Fogle retreats to his team of Businessmen. Matt lingers by Tracy.

MATT

Impressive, Ms. Shepard. Tracy. You've got quite a pair for a lady.

TRACY

Well, thank you... I guess.

MATT

If someone told me yesterday that I'd be shaking hands today with that mick leprechaun, I'd've shit in his hat. But it's a good deal. Hell, I'm glad the whole fucking episode is finally over.

TRACY

I'm glad you're glad, Mr. Blankenschein.

MATT

Matt.

(beat)

Yeah, I'm glad it's over. Now we can proceed to Defcon One - nuclear winter for PicoTech. What's next for you, Tracy?

TRACY

Me? Go back to the hotel. Shower off the coating of testosterone. Have a cocktail by the pool.

MATT

No, I meant--

TRACY

--My next mediation? As I recall, it's a dispute over oil leases in Texas. Someone probably laid pipe where they shouldn't have.

Matt grins.

EXT. FANCY LA HOTEL - NIGHT

Casually dressed, Tracy lounges with a cocktail by a lighted pool as TONEY TYPES swim and carouse. At a cabana nearby, FAMOUS MOVIE PEOPLE argue over the terms of a movie contract. Tracy shakes her head at what seems to be a looming disagreement seeking a resolution. Her cell phone RINGS.

TRACY

Tracy Shepard.

(beat)

Oh, hello, Matt.

(beat)

Tomorrow? I'd love to, but I'm flying back to New York early.

(beat)

OK. I promise. Next time I'm out this way. Yes. I will. Thanks.

INT. JET - DAY

Tracy walks onto the Jet looking sharp and confident. A slouching, rumped-looking Fischer sits in the aisle seat of first class reading a newspaper. Tracy is surprised to see him.

TRACY

Fisch...er? Is that you?

Delighted to see Tracy again, Fischer folds his newspaper and straightens up from his slouch.

FISCHER

Well, good morning, Tracy. How are you? Did you make it on time to your meeting the other day?

Fischer stands to let Tracy pass in front of him.

TRACY

Excellent. And yes, thanks to you I made my meeting.

FISCHER

(Sniffing)

Hmmm... Van Cleef and Arpels?

TRACY

That's right. Very good.

Tracy takes her seat by the window.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I can't tell you enough how grateful I am to you for giving up your seat. You're my white knight, Fischer. I wish I could make it up to you.

FISCHER

Think nothing of it. My meeting with the venture capitalists wasn't until the next day. And please, call me Fish.

Tracy kicks off her designer shoes. Fischer notes the fine definition of her feet.

TRACY

You know, Fish, I travel all over the country for my business, and that was the first time I almost got bumped. My driver overslept and I got to the airport just before the flight took off.

(beat)

I wouldn't want you to think I'm some kind of a scatterbrain.

FISCHER

Hey, it can happen to anyone, Tracy. Bottom line: you got on the plane and made your meeting.

(MORE)

FISCHER (CONT'D)

Someone else might've caved in and waited on standby - or worse, gone home and cried about it. Your perseverance paid off.

Tracy smiles in appreciation for the compliment.

INT. JET - DAY (LATER)

Tracy listens to music. Fischer reads "A Life Decoded."
Tracy studies the book cover, then pulls out the earbuds.

TRACY

You had a meeting with venture capitalists? What sort of business are you in, Fischer?

Fischer puts down the book.

FISCHER

I co-own a biotech firm with my twin brother Fletcher. RodCone Laboratories. I'm sure you've never heard of it.

Tracy shakes her head.

FISCHER (CONT'D)

We're developing a therapy for a rare ophthalmologic affliction, and so far all the preliminary test results are encouraging.

Fischer retrieves a business card and hands it to Tracy.

FISCHER (CONT'D)

We're about ready to start clinical trials. That's when the serious financing is critical, hence my meeting with the VCs.

TRACY

What's the rare eye affliction?

FISCHER

Retinitis pigmentosa.

TRACY

My God!

FISCHER

It's a progressive retinal dystrophy.

TRACY

I know!

FISCHER

It starts with tunnel vision and usually leads to total blindness.

TRACY

I know! My father has it. He's essentially blind now, poor man. He used to teach Physics at Columbia. But now...

Feeling weepy, Tracy turns away before continuing.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I'm so excited you're working on a cure. What kind of results have you seen so far?

FISCHER

Well, first off, it's not a cure. It's a therapy. Patients would have to take a pill every day. But back to your question: the results are remarkable. Up to 75 percent regeneration of retinal cells.

TRACY

That sounds impressive. So what did the VCs say, Fish? When will you start the clinical trials?

FISCHER

That's the problem. My brother Fletch doesn't want to bring new investors into the business. He's worried they'll take over and interfere with the research.

TRACY

Oh, no.

FISCHER

He means well I suppose, but he has no concept of what it takes to launch a new drug into the market. The VCs are hot for the project, but Fletch won't budge. And without the funding, we're stuck.

TRACY

Why don't you bring in the VCs anyway? Go around your brother.

FISCHER

Fletch and I inherited the business from our father. He set it up so we each own exactly 50 percent of the shares. I can't make a major decision like bringing new investors in without Fletch's vote.

TRACY

I see.

FISCHER

What really pisses me off - excuse me - what irritates me most is that Fletch is completely hands-off. He never gets involved in day-to-day operations. I haven't even seen him in three months.

Silence as Fischer sulks and Tracy mulls the possibilities.

TRACY

Y'know, Fish, I'm a pretty good professional mediator. I help resolve differences for a living. Perhaps I could be of assistance in getting your brother to change his mind. I really would hate for progress on your new drug to grind to a halt.

(beat)

Besides, I owe you one for giving up your seat the other day.

FISCHER

Really, Tracy, you don't owe--

TRACY

--I want to help Fischer. I really do. My father... Let me help you on this.

FISCHER

Well, OK. That would be great.

TRACY

Perfect.

FISCHER

I bet top mediators like you charge more than the value of a first class seat. Let me at least pay you something.

TRACY
That's not--

FISCHER
--I insist.

TRACY
Well, if it'll make you feel
better, let's say... \$1,000?

FISCHER
Deal!

TRACY
My favorite word.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Fischer is on the sidewalk talking on a cell phone. Tracy struts out of the airport pulling a stylish suitcase and heads directly for her waiting limo where a DRIVER stands by the open back door. Fischer spots Tracy and runs to her just as she steps into the limo.

FISCHER
Tracy!

TRACY
(Startled)
Fish?

FISCHER
I was wondering, Tracy, if you'd
like to see a presentation on the
eye drug. I'd love to tell you all
about it. Interested?

TRACY
Sure. That'd be great.

FISCHER
Alright. I'll set it up.

The Limo drives off into a sea of yellow cabs.

INT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY

Relaxed in the back seat, Tracy speaks on the phone.

TRACY
Midland, Texas? OK. Not next
week, I have that other thing.
(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

(beat)

Shale oil? Alright. Pull the base research. What else, Carla?

(beat)

Woody Johnson? What's that? Some kind of dildo?

Chuckling, she cups the phone and calls to her Driver.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Yusef, take the Whitestone.

(Into phone)

The owner of the New York Jets?
Player contract issue, right? OK.
Did you tell my father I'm coming over?

(beat)

Thanks, Carla.

EXT. WHITESTONE BRIDGE - DAY

Tracy's Limo crosses the bridge.

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

Fischer shuffles to a crappy car covered in pigeon droppings and throws a piece of luggage into the truck. He hops into driver's seat, turns the key and hears a series of CLICKS suggesting the battery is quite dead. Fischer bangs the steering wheel with both hands.

EXT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE - DAY

Tracy's limo pulls to the curb in front of DAD's Brownstone. The Driver opens the door and Tracy proceeds up the steps to the door. She pulls keys from her purse, unlocks the door and enters.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy walks in and places her purse on the kitchen counter.

TRACY

Dad? It's me. Where are you?

O.S. a toilet FLUSHES followed by the SOUND of water running then a THUMP of an object falling on the floor.

DAD (O.S.)

Damn it!

TRACY
Dad? Are you alright?

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/BATHROOM - DAY

Dad stands at an old-fashioned pedestal sink gripping it with both hands for support. He is frail-looking and wears a belt and suspenders. His blind eyes wander.

DAD
Tracy Rae? I'm in here. I dropped
the soap. Can you help me find it?

Tracy enters the Bathroom, locates the soap, rinses it off and places it in Dad's palm.

TRACY
I'll be in the living room. Do you
want anything from the kitchen?

DAD
How about some juice? I'll be out
in a jiff.

Tracy rubs Dad's shoulder and pecks him on the cheek.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy roots around in the refrigerator and pulls out a quart of milk. She sniffs it and recoils. Tracy dumps the lumpy contents down the sink and reaches into a drawer for a towel. Hidden under the towel is a semi-automatic pistol. She's disturbed at the presence of a weapon.

Dad feels his way into the kitchen, running his hand along the wall.

DAD
So nice of you to visit me. What's
new, Tracy Rae?

Tracy quickly stows the pistol in her purse. She pours a glass of juice, takes Dad by the arm and leads him out.

TRACY
Nothing special, Dad.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dad grabs at the air around him until he latches onto the arms of his chair. He sits down with an audible SIGH. Tracy hands Dad the glass of juice and takes a seat nearby.

TRACY

Well, maybe one thing. I met the owner of a bio-tech lab here in the City. He's working on a cure, or a therapy, something - for retinitis.

Dad jerks his head from side to side like a lizard, attempting to pinpoint his daughter's exact whereabouts.

DAD

Really!? That's fantastic! When will it be available?

TRACY

They're almost ready to go to clinical trial, but they need a cash infusion. The owner wants to bring some venture capitalists in, but his brother doesn't want to. Right now they're stuck.

DAD

Hell, Tracy. You're a mediator. Can't you get them to agree?

TRACY

That's what I hope to do, Dad. I'm going to Jersey in a few days to meet with the brother.

DAD

Tell them I'll be a volunteer.

TRACY

Okay, Dad. But it's still experim--

DAD

--It's been four years since I've read a book, or seen your face. Please, I'll happily be their guinea pig. Tell them.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LOBBY - DAY

The Lobby of the Office Building is a dusty, cramped, poorly lit space. A doorman's desk sits by the wall unattended.

Tracy scans the environs then steps up to a glass case displaying the names of various businesses that occupy the building. She spots the entry "RodCone Labs - Suite 212."

EXT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Tracy stands outside a plain door with the number 212 stenciled on it. She presses a button and is buzzed in.

INT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Tracy walks into Suite 212 which is occupied by a few WORKERS who sit at steel desks arranged in a row. A RECEPTIONIST stands and greets Tracy.

RECEPTIONIST

Ms. Shepard? Mr. Cuttbate is expecting you. Can I get you something to drink?

TRACY

Nothing, thanks.

The Receptionist leads Tracy toward the Conference Room. She glances down at Tracy's shoes.

RECEPTIONIST

I love your shoes, Ms. Shepard. Blahniks?

TRACY

Christian Louboutin.

The Receptionist nods, impressed.

INT. SUITE 212/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

The Receptionist escorts Tracy into the Conference Room and leaves. Three men who are seated at the long conference table stand up to greet Tracy. They are Fischer, KNECHT and TORRENT. Knecht, RodCone's business director is mid-30s, dressed in a dark business suit. Sixty-something Torrent, the chief scientist wears a white lab coat.

FISCHER

Tracy. I'm glad you could make it. Can I get you something?

TRACY

No thanks, Fischer. I'm good.

Fischer leads Tracy to a seat at the table. He sits next to her; Knecht sits across the table. Torrent stands awkwardly at a lectern.

FISCHER

Tracy Shepard. Let me introduce you to my business director, Chad Knecht.

Fischer pronounces his name "Connect." Knecht reaches across the table and shakes Tracy's hand.

FISCHER (CONT'D)

And our chief scientist, Dr. James Torrent.

Torrent nods from the lectern.

FISCHER (CONT'D)

OK, Tracy, I know you're busy, so we won't waste any time. Jim there will give you a high-level overview of our research. I think you'll be impressed.

TRACY

I hope so.

FISCHER

Yes... And then when you meet with Fletcher, you'll be fully prepared.
(beat)
OK, Jim. Take it away.

Torrent presses a button on the lectern causing the lights to dim. A gruesome picture of a needle piercing an eyeball appears on the screen. Tracy recoils in disgust.

TORRENT

This is how some researchers have foolishly tried to cure retinitis pigmentosa, Ms. Shepard.

TRACY

(Grimacing)
Good lord.

TORRENT

We're working on a better way. A therapy. A pill patients will take every day to gradually improve and maintain the quality of their vision. Here's what we're doing.

Torrent clicks a button and a ball-and-stick model of a molecule appears on the screen.

TORRENT (CONT'D)
This is a protein called rhodopsin.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUITE 212/CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY (LATER)

A large "?" appears on screen. Torrent raises the lights.

TORRENT
Any questions, Ms. Shepard?

TRACY
I don't know. I guess not. That was pretty technical, but I think I got the basics. Really remarkable.

FISCHER
It's expensive work, Tracy. We really need to get Fletch on board with the VCs. I hope you can use your mediation magic on him - although I wouldn't be surprised if he refuses to see you.

TRACY
Would it surprise you if Fletcher already agreed to meet with me?

FISCHER
You mean he--

TRACY
--I'm taking the train to Hamilton Square tomorrow morning.

FISCHER
Wow. You're good.

Tracy smiles, pleased to receive Fischer's praise. She stands up, followed by Fischer and Knecht, and heads for the door. Just before exiting Knecht intercepts her.

KNECHT
Thank you for coming by today, Ms. Shepard. I'll email you a copy of Dr. Torrent's presentation.

FISCHER

Let me know how you make out with
Fletcher, Tracy.

TRACY

I certainly will. Bye bye.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tracy enters her spacious apartment on Sutton Place with its handsome view of the Queensborough Bridge. An original Kandinsky painting hangs on the wall. Tracy checks mail.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Tracy sheds her clothing. She places her expensive shoes into a slot in her closet which holds 100 pairs.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BATHROOM - DAY

Tracy lounges in a luxurious bath.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Wearing a terrycloth robe, her hair wrapped with a towel, Tracy reaches into a dresser drawer, gingerly removes her father's pistol by the grip and carefully looks it over.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

With the pistol atop her desk Tracy sits in front of her laptop typing.

TRACY'S P.O.V. - GOOGLE SEARCH BAR

Into which she types "how to disarm a pistol"

BACK TO SCENE

Tracy studies the laptop screen, clicks on a website and reads the instructions. Holding the pistol at arm's length while pointing it at the floor she turns her head to the side and hesitantly presses a button causing the magazine to pop out and fall to the floor. Shaking her head sadly she retrieves the magazine and stashes it and the pistol into her drawer.

Tracy then turns her attention to the laptop.

TRACY'S P.O.V. - EMAIL PROGRAM

Where a long list of emails await her attention, among them one from Chad Knecht titled "RodCone Presentation."

BACK TO SCENE

Tracy prints out the document sent by Knecht.

EXT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW/PORCH - DAY

Toting a rich-looking alligator briefcase, Tracy rings the doorbell. After a moment during which Tracy paces the porch, FLETCHER opens the door. He holds a telephone to his ear. Fletcher's dirty blonde hair is combed straight back, and he sports huge, boxy eyeglasses. Tracy extends her hand.

TRACY

Good afternoon, Mr.--

FLETCHER

--You're early. Can you wait here until I'm done with my call?

Fletcher shuts the door in her face.

EXT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW/PORCH - DAY (LATER)

Tracy paces the porch, checks her watch, and just as she's about to give up, Fletcher opens the door. Tracy turns around and steps up.

FLETCHER

I'm ready now Mrs. Shepard.

TRACY

Ms. Shepard. Tracy Shepard. How do you do, Mr. Cuttbate.

Tracy extends her hand again. Fletcher hesitates, then belated shakes it. Fletcher turns and Tracy follows him in.

INT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW - DAY

Fletcher's Bungalow is cluttered with books and magazines, an electric guitar, and an easel propping up a painting of a surgical-like image vaguely reminiscent of Frida Kahlo's pain-filled self-portraits. Tracy examines the surroundings.

TRACY

What a pleasant house you have here, Mr. Cuttbate.

FLETCHER

No, it's not.

(beat)

Have a seat.

Tracy looks around for the least-grungy chair and sits down, placing her briefcase on the floor. Fletcher plops into an overstuffed divan.

TRACY

I saw a very interesting presentation about your company's drug the other day. It seems like it could be revolutionary. But I'm just a layperson. What's your assessment?

FLETCHER

It has its pluses and minuses.

TRACY

Do you think it's ready for clinical trials?

FLETCHER

Maybe.

SOUND - TELEPHONE RINGING O.S.

Fletcher rises and exits. Irritated, Tracy wanders around the room, picking up some magazines on the coffee table. She runs her fingers across the strings of Fletcher's electric guitar. Fletcher returns, startling Tracy.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Sorry about that. Where were we?

The two retake their seats.

TRACY

We were talking about... the drug. Is it ready to be tested, in your opinion?

Fletcher waits a long time to respond.

FLETCHER

Possibly.

TRACY

Look, Mr. Cuttbate. I only came--

FLETCHER

--Why did you come out here? Why do you care so much about this, Mrs. Shepard? I don't suppose you know someone with retinitis?

TRACY

(Angrily)

Yes, as a matter of fact I do. Someone I love very much. My father. And it disturbs me greatly that a promising cure might not see the light of day because you can't come to terms on something as mundane as financing. It's a goddamned shame.

Tracy stands abruptly and reaches for her briefcase. Fletcher's imperious demeanor melts into that of a chastened school-boy.

FLETCHER

Wait. Please don't go, Ms. Shep... Tracy. I... I'm really sorry for acting like a jerk. I mean it... sincerely. Please, sit down. Fischer didn't tell me your father has retinitis.

(beat)

Can he... see at all?

Tracy shakes her head.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry to hear that. Please, Tracy. Don't go.

Tracy sits back down slowly.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

(Teary-eyed)

Can I get you something to drink?

INT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW - DAY (LATER)

Tracy sits next to Fletcher on the divan sipping lemonade. A notebook full of mathematical equations and scribbles sits open on the coffee table.

FLETCHER

I suppose Jim Torrent told you all about the wonderful therapy he's working on. The daily regimen?

TRACY

Mmm-hmm. I got a copy of his presentation yesterday.

FLETCHER

A therapy... not a cure. You understand the difference, right? Kind of like blood pressure medicine, or Somavert - you have to take it every day for the rest of your life. And if you stop taking it, you regress. Understand?

TRACY

I understand.
(beat)
What's Somavert?

Fletcher squirms a moment.

FLETCHER

Uh, it's, uh, a treatment for acromegaly. Anyway, what would you say if I told you I'm working on an actual cure for retinitis?

Fletcher taps the notebook proudly.

TRACY

Really? That's fantastic.

FLETCHER

Not according to Fischer. You see, a life-long therapy stands to make a hell of lot more money than a one time cure. He and his men don't want to sell a cure. Not good business.

TRACY

But--

FLETCHER

--I'm against Fischer's plan to bring in the venture capitalists because they don't care about cures and quality of life and all that shit... excuse me. It's all about the money to them.

TRACY

Hmmm. I can see your point. How far along are you with your cure?

Fletcher looks down at his hands sheepishly.

FLETCHER

Well, uh, it's in the early study phase. Not too far along, actually.

(beat)

If I could only get the money to take it all to the next level... I wish I was good with business like my brother.

(beat)

Fischer never lets me see any of the company's finances. For all I know, he's gonna cut me out of the action if his drug gets FDA approval and RodCone goes public.

TRACY

Do you really think that's a possibility?

FLETCHER

I wouldn't put it past him.

TRACY

That's a pretty seri--

FLETCHER

--Listen, Tracy. I behaved like a boor earlier because I thought you were just another one of Fischer's mind-games. But I know you're here because you're genuinely interested in a cure for this terrible disease. More lemonade?

TRACY

Sure.

Fletcher pours some lemonade into Tracy's glass.

FLETCHER

It was nice of you to come all the way out here. I thought it would be a waste of time, but I'm glad I got the opportunity to explain my side.

TRACY

Me too.

FLETCHER

Uh, Tracy, don't tell Fischer about what I said about him cutting me out of the action. I shouldn't have mentioned that. And don't tell him about my work on a cure either. It's way too soon for that, OK?

TRACY

If you say so. It's important that my clients trust me.

FLETCHER

I trust you, Tracy.

TRACY

Well, thank you.

Tracy scans the room and sets her eyes on the guitar.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Do you play the guitar, Fletch?

FLETCHER

Yeah, a little. Well actually, I've been playing since I was about nine. I bought that Fender 20 years ago at an auction - it's the same kind that Keith Richards plays. 1955 Telecaster.

Fletcher walks to the guitar. He turns on the amp and plugs in the cord which emits a SCREECH. Tracy looks on with concern that he might actually start playing. A horn HONKS O.S.

TRACY

I really should get--

Fletcher faithfully plays the first bars of "Honky Tonk Women." Tracy nods, impressed.

FLETCHER

--Who's your favorite rock star, Tracy?

TRACY

Geez, that's tough. I was a Bowie fan as a kid. Ziggy Stardust period, y'know, glitter--

Fletcher plays the opening chords of "Moonage Daydream."

FLETCHER
(Singing)
--I'm an alligator. I'm a mama-
papa coming for you.

Fletcher nods to Tracy who hesitates at first then blurts out the next lyric.

TRACY
(Singing)
I'm a space invader, I'll be a rock-
n-rollin' bitch for you.

Fletcher nods encouragingly.

FLETCHER
(Singing)
Keep your mouth shut, you're
squawking like a pink monkey bird.
And I'm busting up my brains for
the words. Keep your 'lectric eye
on me babe.

TRACY AND FLETCHER
(singing)
Put your ray gun to my head. Press
your space face close to mine,
love. Freak out in a moonage
daydream!

Tracy laughs happily and applauds.

TRACY
Wow, Fletch. You're really good.
Do you play in a band?

FLETCHER
Not anymore. No time.

Tracy reaches for the glass of lemonade, just as a car horn HONKS O.S. She glances at her watch and bolts upright.

TRACY
Shit! The train back to the City
leaves in 20 minutes. I'm sorry,
Fletch, I've got to go. I enjoyed
spending the afternoon with you.

Fletcher places the guitar back on its stand.

FLETCHER
Me too. But I'm glad it turned out
better than it began.

Fletcher escorts Tracy to the door.

EXT. FLETCHER'S BUNGALOW/PORCH - DAY

Fletcher shakes Tracy's hand.

FLETCHER
Have a good trip back to the city,
Tracy.

TRACY
Thanks, Fletch. I will.

Fletcher watches Tracy walk to a cab waiting at the curb. He continues to watch as the cab drives down the lane and out of sight, then he walks back inside, singing to himself.

FLETCHER
(Singing)
Don't fake it baby. Lay the real
thing on me.

INT. TRAIN (TRAVELING) - DAY

Tracy sits in a first class seat reading Fortune as the train lumbers along. She puts down the magazine, retrieves the printout of RodCone Labs's presentation and thumbs through the material until she reaches a page with a big question mark like the one at the end of Torrent's pitch. Tracy discovers several additional pages marked "Confidential" that contain business spreadsheets.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy sits at her desk, poring through the business spreadsheets and consulting her laptop. She sits back and shakes her head. She circles some numbers and writes the word "WTF" next to them.

Tracy's laptop makes a "ping" SOUND. She sees an email has arrived from Knecht.

TRACY'S P.O.V. - EMAIL

Which reads "Dear Ms. Shepard, I accidentally sent you the wrong file yesterday.

Please discard it and replace it with the corrected version which I have attached. Let me know if you have any questions. Sincerely, Chad Knecht."

BACK TO SCENE

Tracy shakes her head contemptuously.

INT. UPSCALE BAR AND GRILL - DAY

Fletcher, dressed way too casually, and Tracy, looking sharp, arrive at the Bar and Grill. The MAITRE'D escorts the odd couple to a table in the back. He holds the chair for Tracy while casting a disapproving gaze toward the unkempt Fletcher. He presents menus and leaves.

FLETCHER

I'm sure you already guessed this, but I'm not used to going to nice restaurants, especially not with a well-dressed, beautiful woman. I hope I'm not embarrassing you too much, Tracy.

Tracy rolls her eyes as if it's the most ridiculous thing she's ever heard.

TRACY

I'm just glad you could meet me on such short notice. I really thought we should get together right away. It's about the financials of RodCone Labs.

A WAITER arrives. Fletcher picks up the menu.

WAITER

Pardon me, madame, sir. Would you care for sparkling, still, tap?

Tracy looks to Fletcher, but he's engrossed in the menu.

TRACY

Still, please.

FLETCHER

What's con-fit?

WAITER

Cone-fee, sir, is the French method of preparing salted duck legs in rendered fat.

Fletcher snaps the menu shut.

FLETCHER
Sounds good, that's what I'll have.
Tracy, what about you?

Unprepared to order so quickly, Tracy fumbles with the menu.

TRACY
I'll have the... uh, the tuna,
medium rare.

WAITER
Very good, madame, sir.

The Waiter leaves with the menus.

FLETCHER
What's the bad news you came to
tell me, Tracy? I assume it's
something bad, right?

Tracy pulls the RodCone presentation from her purse and lays it out on the table. Fletcher cranes his neck to view it.

TRACY
Chad Knecht emailed me these
confidential spreadsheets by
mistake.

FLETCHER
Jesus, what is all this stuff?

Tracy points to a chart with a butter knife.

TRACY
In this column are actual expenses,
and the one next to it seems to
contain fabricated expenses. And
these figures here are used to
calculate a phony I.R.R.

FLETCHER
What's that?

TRACY
I.R.R? Internal rate of return?
It's kind of like N.P.V... uh, net
present value--

FLETCHER
--How do you know all this gorp?

TRACY

I have an MBA. I worked at Salomon Brothers before I started my own mediation company.

FLETCHER

MBA, huh? I'm impressed. Where from?

TRACY

Columbia. My father was a physics professor there.

(beat)

Aren't you concerned about what might be going on at your company? What Fischer might be involved in? It might be serious fraud, Fletch. What are you going to do?

The Waiter arrives with the food.

FLETCHER

Have a nice lunch with you.

TRACY

Seriously, Fletch. I'm concerned for the cure. And for you too, of course. Maybe you should hire a forensic accountant before the whole enterprise folds up and you lose everything.

FLETCHER

You're probably right. I'll call my lawyer. I sure hope Fischer's not involved. That would disappoint me, but not really come as a big surprise.

Fletcher hacks at the duck leg. Tracy places a luscious piece of fatty tuna into her mouth.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

When I was a little boy, my mother - rest her soul - told me I was the first to be born. She told me when I was born Fischer was holding my heel. I think that says it all.

Confused, Tracy tilts her head.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

Jacob and Esau? Genesis, chapter 25? Nevermind.

Tracy and Fletcher eat quietly for a moment

TRACY

I couldn't help noticing the painting in your den, Fletch. It kind of reminds me of Frida Kahlo. Did you paint it?

FLETCHER

Yeah. I know it looks like I copied her style, because I did. After Mama went blind--

TRACY

--Your mother was blind?

FLETCHER

Yeah. Glaucoma. Anyway, I came to appreciate how painful blindness can be. That's what I was trying to capture.

(beat)

I bet you know a lot about art, Tracy. Do you have a favorite artist? Van Gogh? Rembrandt?

TRACY

I guess I would say... Wassily Kandinsky.

FLETCHER

Who?

TRACY

Kandinsky. He was a Russian artist. I have one of his paintings.

Tracy sips her water, trying not to come off as an art snob.

FLETCHER

Kandinsky? I'm going to look him up. Is that with a "C"?

TRACY

"K".

FLETCHER

Maybe I can see it sometime.

TRACY

Uh, sure. Maybe. Sometime.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Tracy talks on a cell phone while pacing the lobby of a large Office Building in Midland, Texas.

TRACY

I'm still waiting for those 1990s gas-well leases.

(beat)

Yeah, I got those. I need 1997 through 1999.

(beat)

Hot? Shit, it's already 103 and it's only 11 o'clock. What else?

(beat)

RodCone Labs? What do they want?

(beat)

Well, if it's urgent, alright. Send me those leases ASAP.

Tracy hangs up, takes a seat in a mid-century modern chair facing a fountain and makes another call.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

RodCone Laboratories. How may I help you?

TRACY

This is Tracy Shepard. Someone there asked me to call? Something urgent?

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

Oh, yes. Thank you, Mrs. Shepard. It's been a hectic day. Let me check my notes.

(long pause)

Yes. I'm afraid we can't remit the money for your bill. The one for \$1,000 for... let me see... for alternative dispute resolution? You sent us an invoice last week - well, I'm afraid we can't pay it.

TRACY

Why not?

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

We can't pay for anything right now. The FBI raided our company on Monday and froze our accounts.

Tracy leans forward in the low-slung chair, dumbfounded.

TRACY

What happened? What's going on?
Let me talk to Fischer... Mr.
Cuttbate. I'm a friend of his.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

No one knows where he is. Mr.
Cuttbate disappeared before the FBI
came in. So did Mr. Knecht.

TRACY

I don't... I mean... Well, if he
comes in have him call me.

RECEPTIONIST (O.S.)

I'm sorry, Mrs. Shepard, I have to
go.

TRACY

(Mutters)
Holy shit.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY

Jet lands on the runway.

EXT. JFK AIRPORT - DAY (LATER)

Tracy's limo pulls away from the curb.

EXT. TRACY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The limo pulls to the entrance of Tracy's apartment building.
She strides past the DOORMAN into the building.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Tracy sits at her desk inspecting the mail. She tosses one
piece after another into the trash can, stopping at a
particular envelope. She slits open the envelope and pulls
out a check and a letter.

FLETCHER (V.O.)

Dear Tracy, I took your advice and
hired a forensic accountant to
analyze the charts you gave me.
Unfortunately you were right:
someone at the lab was keeping two
sets of books. I decided to call
the FBI.

(MORE)

FLETCHER (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I know now that many people were
 involved, including my brother. I
 also learned the lab can't pay its
 bills, so please accept the
 enclosed personal check from me for
 \$1,000 to cover the fee you and
 Fischer agreed to. Sincerely,
 Fletcher Cuttbate.

Tracy sits back in her chair and twists her hair.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Tracy and Dad sit together on the sofa.

TRACY
 Honestly, Dad, you wouldn't believe
 the way these so-called business
 leaders behave. Sometimes I feel
 like I'm deciding who gets to play
 next with the dump truck in the
 sandbox.

DAD
 Why don't you cut back on the work?
 Take a rest. Travel.

TRACY
 I already travel too much.

DAD
 Find a nice man. Fall in love.

TRACY
 I don't know... I'd like... It's
 just sometimes I... I don't know
 what's wrong.

Tracy looks down at the floor and rubs her hands together,
 then not wanting to be a buzzkill, perks up.

TRACY (CONT'D)
 You know what they say: a hard man
 is, I mean a good man is hard to
 find.
 (beat)
 Hey Dad, have you ever heard of
 Woody Johnson?

DAD
 Sure. He owns the Jets.

TRACY

Well, my next assignment - should I choose to accept it - is a contract dispute involving the Jets and some high-flying college fullback or hunchback or--

DAD

--Whatever happened to that lab that was working on a retinitis cure?

TRACY

Uh, they, um, they're still trying to figure it out.

DAD

Oh.

TRACY

But, one of the owners is working on something even better. He just needs money to get it rolling.

DAD

Money? That's all? Why don't you help him out, Tracy?

TRACY

Geez, Dad. I'm not a banker. Besides, he's still far from getting anything into the market. It'll take time.

DAD

I see. Well, actually, I can't.

Tracy checks her watch.

TRACY

I gotta go, Dad. Talk to you later.

Tracy kisses her father's cheek.

DAD

Let me know how the big football player affair turns out.

INT. LIMO (TRAVELING) - DAY

Tracy receives a phone call.

TRACY

Hello?

INTERCUT with Fletcher's Bungalow.

FLETCHER

Tracy, it's Fletch. How're you?
Is this a good time to talk?

TRACY

Sure. I'm heading home. You
really didn't have to send me--

FLETCHER

--I've got something important to
tell you, Trace. I feel a little
stupid for not confiding in you
before, knowing now what a fine
woman you are.

TRACY

What are you talking about, Fletch?

FLETCHER

Can you meet me Friday night for
dinner? I have some things I'd
like to show you. My treat.

TRACY

I, uh, I have to check with my
secretary, y'know. She manages my
calendar.

FLETCHER

Oh.
(Long pause)
OK.

TRACY

Y'know... Screw it. Yes, Fletch,
I would love to have dinner with
you. I'm intrigued. Where shall
we meet?

EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tracy waits on the sidewalk, dressed to kill. From O.C.
Fletcher walks toward Tracy. He also looks
uncharacteristically sharp in a double-breasted suit, white
shirt and stylish tie. Tracy spots him but isn't sure it's
him at first - he looks too good.

TRACY

Fletch?

FLETCHER

Wha'dya think, Trace? Do I look better than I did last time?

Fletcher spins around.

TRACY

Wow, you look great. I'm stunned. I mean, you look sharp.

FLETCHER

It's an Armadillo Zeg-na suit.

TRACY

(Chuckling)
Very nice.

FLETCHER

Needless to say - but I'll say it anyway - you look gorgeous Trace. I hope you like the restaurant.

TRACY

I know I will.

Tracy loops her arm underneath Fletcher's and they walk into the Restaurant.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Fletcher and Tracy sit across from one another at an elegantly set table eating artistically presented food. Wait-staff come and go, filling water glasses, pouring wine.

TRACY

So, after yet another sexist remark about me in front of a client, I decided to quit the world of investment banking and try mediation instead.

FLETCHER

What're you working on next, Tracy?

A WAITER pours the last of a bottle of wine.

WAITER

Excuse me, sir. Would you care for another bottle?

FLETCHER

Sure.

The Waiter leaves with the empty bottle.

TRACY

Mediating a 3-way dispute with the New York Jets, a college football star and his aggrieved agent.

FLETCHER

Kinda like Jerry Maguire, huh?

TRACY

Probably not. This agent sounds like a whiny loser. But I can easily imagine college-boy shouting "show me the money!"

The Waiter returns with a bottle of wine and shows Fletcher the label.

FLETCHER

Is that the same stuff as before?

WAITER

Certainly, sir. Château d'Armailhac, 1996.

The Waiter pours the wine and departs.

TRACY

Fletch, where do you think Fischer went? What's going to happen to the lab - and all the retinitis research?

FLETCHER

I honestly don't know, Trace. Deep down Fischer's a good man. Maybe he got in over his head. No doubt that bastard Knecht was behind it.

(beat)

All this drama throws RodCone Labs into Limbo.

TRACY

It's so sad. I suppose the pressure warped his judgment.

FLETCHER

Doesn't make any difference now.
Whether Fischer was a dupe or the
mastermind, if they find him, he'll
probably do time.

(beat)

Our assets are frozen and the
creditors are starting legal
action.

(beat)

This rabbit is really good. I
never had it before.

TRACY

You're amazing, Fletch. You're so
calm. How do you do it? If it was
me, and my company was in deep
trouble, and my brother was on the
lam, I'd be going crazy.

FLETCHER

I'm optimistic.

TRACY

How come?

The Waiter arrives with food.

FLETCHER

Is that the venison? It looks like
pudding.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

Fletcher and Tracy have moved along into the meal.

FLETCHER

You remember those equations I
showed you back at my house? Those
weren't just theories. A colleague
at Penn State is helping me test
formulas on animals. The results
are more than promising. We're
close to a real cure for retinitis
pigmentosa, Tracy.

TRACY

I don't understand. Are you saying--

The Waiter arrives.

WAITER

--Excuse me madame, sir. May I
bring another bottle of wine.

TRACY

No thank--

FLETCHER

--Absolutely.

The waiter departs.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

I know I led you to believe I was
just messing around, because I
didn't want anyone to know about
it, but, yeah, I'm on the verge of
a real cure.

TRACY

My God, Fletch! That's fantastic!
An actual cure. Why didn't you
show the formula to Fischer? Oh
wait, right, not good for business.

(beat)

I think all this wine is going to
my head.

The waiter returns, pops the cork and refills the glasses.

FLETCHER

That's one reason. But when I
learned he was talking to venture
capitalists, I got worried. Why
share a good thing with a bunch of
clowns who know the cost of
everything and the value of
nothing?

TRACY

So sayeth Oscar Wilde.

Tracy takes a swig of wine.

FLETCHER

Did he say that? I thought I made
it up.

INT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT (LATER)

Tracy picks at a dessert. A half-drunk snifter of Cognac
sits nearby, and she's a bit tight. Fletcher drinks bourbon
from a rocks glass.

TRACY

Y'know, my dad wants t' volunteer
t' be a test subject.

FLETCHER

Well, just like with Fischer's
therapy, I have to line up funding
for clinical trials. That ain't
cheap.

TRACY

What're you gonna do? How're you
gonna get the money, Fletch?

FLETCHER

After my father died, he left Fish
and me each a half million dollars
in stocks and bonds. Fish spent a
good chunk on toys and nice
furniture. I denied myself the
comforts of life and invested.
You've seen my dumpy house. Would
you believe I have more than a
million dollars in savings?

TRACY

Really? That's fantastic. So,
when will you start the clinical
trials?

FLETCHER

After I line up another mil. It'll
cost at least two to get going. I
have to hire some people, buy
insurance, post a bond, deal with a
shitload of FDA bureaucracy.

(beat)

That's why - don't laugh - I'm
meeting with a new vulture capital
firm tomorrow.

TRACY

What? You're gonna take VC money?
I don't und--

FLETCHER

--As much as I despise them, it
seems that's the only way research
turns into a product. Unless
you're a multi-billion dollar
pharmaceutical company. I don't
have a choice, really.

TRACY

Gee, Fletch. I don't know...

The Waiter drops off the check. Fletcher pulls out his wallet and counts out large bills. Tracy sips her Cognac.

FLETCHER

Can I ask you a question?

TRACY

You jus' did.

FLETCHER

Huh? Oh, I get it.

TRACY

(Giggling)

I'm sorry, Fletch. What is it?

FLETCHER

How do you keep your legs in such great shape? You must work out, or swim a lot. You have the most gorgeous legs I've ever seen. And your feet--

Taken aback, Tracy is uncharacteristically flummoxed.

TRACY

--Well, uh, thank you, Fletch. I try. I'm... I'm glad you noticed.

Tracy looks down like a shy schoolgirl and awkwardly examines a fingernail. After a moment, she pushes her hair away from her eyes and smiles.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Ready to go?

EXT. UPSCALE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Fletcher and Tracy stroll the sidewalk outside the Restaurant. Tracy touches Fletcher's shoulder and he turns toward her. As Tracy is taller by a few inches, Fletcher looks up into her somewhat glassy eyes. After a moment, she kisses him on the lips.

TRACY

Would you like to see my apartment?
I could show you my Kandinsky.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy and Fletcher roll around naked in her bed. Tracy moves her head down low. Suddenly, she sits up.

TRACY

Oh my God! Where did you ever...?

The outburst at first startles Fletcher, but he quickly chuckles knowingly.

FLETCHER

It was after a Lou Reed concert--

TRACY

--I didn't know you could get a tattoo on your, um--

FLETCHER

--Penis? Yeah. I guess anything's possible when you're wasted enough. One of my buddies picked out a design of a snake and the guy tattooed it around like it was climbing a tree. It hurt like hell the next day when I sobered up.

TRACY

(Laughing)

I can imagine.

(beat)

Lie back. I wanna try something.

FLETCHER

Uh oh.

TRACY

You said you admire my feet. I caught your brother staring at them. This foot-fetish thing must run in your family.

FLETCHER

Could be.

TRACY

I can peel a banana with my feet.

FLETCHER

Really?

TRACY

Lie back.

Fletcher lies back and a moment later lets out a moan.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Tracy lies in bed motionless. Fletcher tiptoes quietly out of the bathroom fully dressed. Tracy rolls onto her right side and faces Fletcher, groaning in agony.

TRACY

Fletch? What are you doing?

FLETCHER

Good morning, Tracy. I didn't mean to wake you. How're you feeling?

TRACY

Ugh... terrible. I never should've had that second Cognac.

Tracy sits up, then abruptly lies back down.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Ooh... I feel awful.

Suddenly, Tracy bolts past Fletcher into the bathroom. Retching SOUNDS O.S.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY (LATER)

Tracy limps from the bathroom licking her lips. Fletcher waits for her with a glass of water and aspirins.

FLETCHER

I'm sorry you feel so bad. Let me help you back to bed.

Fletcher takes Tracy's arm and walks her toward the bed.

TRACY

I'll be OK. Just let me rest by the window. Would you open it?

Fletcher leads Tracy to a lounge chair and opens the window. He places the glass of water and aspirins on a nearby table.

FLETCHER

I had a wonderful evening, Trace. I'll call you later and let you know how things went with the VCs.

Tracy sits up quickly.

TRACY
I forgot. When is your meeting?

FLETCHER
Three o'clock.

TRACY
Where?

FLETCHER
The Marriott Marquis.

TRACY
I'd like to go with you.

FLETCHER
Really? I mean, that's OK. You don't have to do that - I can manage. Besides, you don't feel well.

TRACY
VCs... They'll want to... I'll feel better by 3.

FLETCHER
Are you sure? I can handle it.

TRACY
I'm sure you can. Still though, I'd like to help. I'll try to get some sleep. I'll be better by 3.

FLETCHER
Really, I--

TRACY
--Don't do anything without me.

INT. HOTEL CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Two VCs, both men in their 50s dressed in dark suits and armed with reams of market data sit on one side of a conference table. Tracy and Fletcher sit on the other side. Tracy appears a bit haggard.

VC #1
Tell me, Mr. Cuttbate. Why do you want to develop a cure when a daily regimen seems the better way to go?

Fletcher angrily slams his palm on the table; he's ready to walk out of the conference room. Tracy gently reaches for Fletcher's forearm and coaxes him back into his seat.

TRACY

Development of a cure for retinitis pigmentosa is non-negotiable. Period. No life-long therapy. That's not the objective of Mr. Cuttbate's company.

VC #1

And why, may I ask, Mrs. Shepard, is that not the objective?

TRACY

Providing a cure is the right thing to do--

VC #2 grins derisively.

TRACY (CONT'D)

--and the clinical trials for a cure will cost significantly less than the trials for a therapy. The time to market will be reduced by a factor of two. The risk of competitive encroachment will be reduced dramatically. Get it?

VC #2 stops grinning. He glances nervously at VC #1 and rummages through his charts and tables.

VC #2

Well... I'm not so sure... I don't know... about that...

After uncomfortable rambling from VC #2, VC #1 intervenes.

VC #1

OK, look. You're the scientific expert Mr. Cuttbate. We're just simple financiers. Far be it from us to tell you how to conduct R&D. If you think a cure is a better play than a therapy, so be it.

Fletcher looks over at Tracy and smiles at the display of her business acumen. She remains stoned faced, refusing to look at Fletcher.

VC #1 (CONT'D)

So, Mr. Cuttbate, do we have a deal? Or at least the foundation for a deal?

Fletcher is about to respond when Tracy speaks up.

TRACY

Mr. Cuttbate will take it under consideration. That's all.

Tracy stands up abruptly and extends her hand, indicating to everyone's surprise that the meeting is over. The VCs file out of the conference room, grumbling and visibly annoyed. When they are gone, Tracy turns to Fletcher.

FLETCHER

What the hell, Tracy?

TRACY

Be cool, Fletch. Those people are just like the VCs your brother courted. Vultures. There's no upside for you and your company in any of their proposals.

FLETCHER

I don't know--

TRACY

--Trust me, they'll rip you off.

FLETCHER

So where am I going to get the funds to go on? I'm out of ideas.

TRACY

From me, Fletch. Let me be your angel investor. You have a million, you need another million. Well, I've got a million. What do you say?

FLETCHER

You? You'd loan me the money?

TRACY

No, Fletch, not loan. Invest. I would take an equity position. If you're interested, we'll assemble our lawyers to work out a mutually beneficial arrangement.

FLETCHER

I don't know what to say. I'm speechless.

TRACY

Remember, Fletch, I expect to make money on the cure, too.

FLETCHER

Of course, of course. I'll call my lawyer right away. How about tomorrow?

TRACY

Let's make it next week, Fletch. I have to check on my guy's availability.

FLETCHER

Whatever you say, Trace.

(beat)

This is so great. Let's celebrate. Have a drink with me?

TRACY

Now? It's only 4:30.

Fletcher shrugs "so-what".

TRACY (CONT'D)

Oh, what the hell. I'm mostly recovered from last night. Where do you want to go?

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Tracy and her lawyer HANNAH exit the limo and walk to the Office Building. Hannah is the same age as Tracy, much shorter and dressed in a dark, conservative suit. She carries an overstuffed briefcase.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LOBBY - DAY

HANNAH

What a dump.

Hannah starts for the elevator, then heads for the stairwell when she notices Tracy already climbing the stairs.

HANNAH (CONT'D)

(Mumbles)

Shit.

Hannah labors up the steps with the heavy briefcase.

INT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Fletcher stands by the open door. Tracy appears, followed closely by Hannah. Fletcher ogles Tracy's feet for a moment. Noticing, she grins imperceptibly.

FLETCHER

C'mon in Tracy. I'm playing receptionist today. I had to let our girl go.

TRACY

Nice to see you again Fletcher. This is my lawyer, Hannah Goldman. Hannah, meet Mr. Cuttbate.

Hannah puts down the briefcase and shakes Fletcher's hand.

HANNAH

How do you do, Mr. Cuttbate.

FLETCHER

Doing fine. Let's go to the conference room. I can't wait to do this. I'm so excited, Tracy.

INT. SUITE 212 CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Two middle-aged men, ANDREWS and ZWIEBEL, wait inside. Andrews is gaunt, Zwiebel is well-tailored and chubby. Both stand when Fletcher, Tracy and Hannah walk in.

FLETCHER

Gentlemen. This is Tracy Shepard, my angel investor. And Hannah Goldman, her lawyer.

Fletcher points to each man in succession.

FLETCHER (CONT'D)

That's Arthur Andrews, my accountant and Bernard Zwiebel, my attorney general.

After all parties shake hands and nod heads, they sit at the conference table. It's Tracy and Hannah on one side and Fletcher and his team on the other. Hannah opens her laptop. Andrews consults some papers.

ANDREWS

RodCone Labs has filed for bankruptcy under Chapter 7. Liquidation. Mr. Cuttbate has formed a new corporation, Cuttbate Associates which will purchase the key assets of the defunct RodCone Labs. Equipment, computer programs, and most importantly, six patents. Office furniture and the like is going on the auction block.

Tracy nods. Hannah takes notes on her laptop.

ZWIEBEL

Mr. Cuttbate here is the sole owner of the molecular models and mathematical formulations for the retinitis cure. RodCone Labs has nothing to do with this intellectual property, so no legal or financial claims can be attached to it by some pissed-off creditor.

TRACY

Very good.

ANDREWS

The incorporation bylaws state that Cuttbate Associates will have three board seats. Right now, Mr. Cuttbate is the Chairman and Zwiebel here is holding a seat temporarily, leaving one seat open. The company has issued a million shares to Mr. Cuttbate with a par value of \$1, and is authorized to issue up to another ten million shares.

FLETCHER

About that open board seat--

ANDREWS

--Ms. Shepard, I understand you've expressed an interest in making a substantial investment in Cuttbate Associates. I've recommended to Mr. Cuttbate that his company issue \$1 million in 20-year Class A debt paying 3.875 percent over Treasuries.

TRACY

I didn't come here to loan money, Mr. Andrews. I came to take an equity stake. Mr. Cuttbate already knows that's my position, and so do you, so let's just cut the crap.

FLETCHER

That's right, Art. I already told you that.

ANDREWS

I'm merely stating what I recommended to you, Mr. Cutt--

ZWIEBEL

--Mrs. Shepard, Cuttbate Associates is prepared to issue a second lot of 999 thousand shares to you in exchange for your \$1 million investment. Under no circumstances will Mr. Cuttbate relinquish majority ownership of his company.

TRACY

I understand and appreciate your position, Mr. Zwiebel, as Fletch's legal advisor. But I have an alternative proposition to make. Grant me ten million options at ten cents exercisable upon IPO--

ZWIEBEL

--Well, I... uh, um--

Zwiebel looks at Andrews for some guidance. Hannah peers up from her laptop and smirks at the floundering lawyer.

TRACY

--And appoint me to the open seat on the board. Cuttbate Associates needs someone like me on the executive team.

ZWIEBEL

Now, Mrs. Shepard--

TRACY

--Ms. Shepard.

ZWIEBEL

I'm sorry, Ms. Shepard. Now, Ms. Shepard--

TRACY

--Mr. Cuttbate, what do you think?

Fletcher looks at his advisors who glare back at him.

FLETCHER

Well, Tracy... uh, Ms. Shepard, there's no major difference, at least to me anyway. Either way the retinitis drug can go to clinical trial. That's all I want.

ANDREWS

You know, if your company goes public, Ms. Shepard here stands to become the majority shareholder.

FLETCHER

Yeah, I know Art. If - a big 'if' - we go public. In the meantime, Tracy here is sticking her neck out a long way. It seems reasonable that she should be rewarded if it pays off.

Silence for several seconds. Tracy nods to Hannah.

HANNAH

If you are amenable to Ms. Shepard's offer, I'll deliver the detailed term sheet. Do you have a printer here somewhere, or did you lose it in the fire sale?

Both Andrews and Zwiebel look down and shake their heads at Hannah's impudent remark. Tracy isn't pleased.

TRACY

Just email it to them, Hannah.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy lies in bed, speaking on the phone while the SOUND of shower water splashes O.S.

TRACY

That's right, Dad. Yeah. The retinitis cure is going forward.

(beat)

I know. Yeah. The new company secured enough financing for... That's right.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

The trials will start... Well, I made a small investment myself. Yeah.

The splashing shower water SOUND O.S. ceases. The SOUND of a shower door opening O.S.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I have to go Dad. Listen, I'll be on the road a lot over the next couple of weeks. That football player thing I told you about. Yeah, me too. Bye.

Tracy hangs up the phone. Fletcher walks into the bedroom with a towel twisted high around his head and another wrapped around his waist. He wears a pair of Tracy's high heels.

FLETCHER

How do you walk in these things?

TRACY

Be careful. They cost \$1200.

FLETCHER

Are you kidding?

TRACY

Each. Turn around.

Fletcher turns 360 degrees.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Hmmm. They make your legs look pretty good, Fletch.

FLETCHER

Is that your secret?

TRACY

One of many. Come over here.

Fletcher lies next to Tracy on the bed wearing the shoes.

TRACY (CONT'D)

I'm really excited about the cure.

FLETCHER

Me too. Andrews thinks we can get things rolling in a couple weeks.

TRACY

Great. That's good timing because I'm going to be on the road a lot this coming month. I have to drive out to Jersey tomorrow morning to meet with the Jets' front office people. Then I have to fly to Dayton, Ohio of all places.

FLETCHER

Oh yeah. Jerry Maguire and the magical football player.

TRACY

Something like that. Did you know the name of the Jets' owner is Woody Johnson?

FLETCHER

Uh uh.

TRACY

Would you believe when I was in college I had a dildo I nicknamed Woody Johnson?

FLETCHER

Seriously?

Tracy pulls out a dildo from her bedside drawer. She shows it to Fletcher who crosses his arms, reluctant to touch it.

TRACY

See. The finish? It kinda looks like it's made out of wood.

Fletcher inspects the dildo hesitantly.

TRACY (CONT'D)

It has a strap.

Fletcher's eyes widen in trepidation.

INT. RESTAURANT - DAY

Tracy and Hannah sit by the window at a tony midtown Restaurant. Each picks at food on tiny plates.

TRACY

I can't believe I have to fly through Atlanta to get to Dayton. What a pain in the ass.

(beat)

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

So what's up with Cuttbate Associates? Everything cool?

HANNAH

Yes. Your bank wired the money this morning.

TRACY

Good.

HANNAH

The term sheet I got from Bernard Zwiebel grants you the options and the board seat. They propose comping you ten k for being on the board. You OK with that?

TRACY

Sure. I don't care. What else?

Hannah pulls out a folder of papers from her briefcase.

HANNAH

Here are the incorporation papers. Zwiebel set up the first board meeting for a week from yesterday--

TRACY

--No good. Have him move it out another week after I'm done with the football player thing.

(beat)

I want this company to succeed. I want that cure to fly through the FDA. What do you think of Zwiebel?

HANNAH

Seems competent.

TRACY

Cuttbate Associates is going to need a high-quality lawyer to deal with all the government red tape. I'm thinking of moving him out. I'll need your help.

HANNAH

Really? Of course. I can start--

TRACY

--Do some research on lawyers with pharmaceutical background and give me a list of five or ten good ones.

Hannah deflates.

HANNAH

Uh, sure. I'll get right on it.

TRACY

Can I drop you off on my way to the airport?

HANNAH

Alright.

INT. JET - DAY

Tracy sits in first class reading Sports Illustrated.

INT. DAYTON BAR - DAY

Tracy sits in a booth in the back accompanied by MILTON, a sports agent, BRADLEY, a college football player, and his father, HAL.

HAL

I spoke with the Jets' front office. They'll pay you off.

MILTON

That's not how business is done, my friend. Why am I talking to this douche-bag? Bradley signed with me.

TRACY

Hal, I told you not to talk to--

HAL

--That paper Bradley signed, that wasn't a contract.

MILTON

Like hell it wasn't.

TRACY

Gentlemen--

BRADLEY

--This whole thing is messing... I don't want to miss the first day of training camp.

MILTON

You shoulda thought of that before,
sonny. I'm your agent!

HAL

Go to hell!

Hal stands like he's going to physically confront Milton.
Tracy steps between them.

TRACY

Let's start over... again.

INT. JET - NIGHT

Tracy sleeps in first class with shades over her eyes.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy shuffles into her apartment. She tosses the key on the
table and places her briefcase on the chair. The clock on
the wall reads 12:30.

EXT. JETS FRONT OFFICE - DAY

With her briefcase in hand, Tracy walks toward the entrance
of the Jets Front Office. Her cell phone rings and she stops
to answer it.

FLETCHER (O.S.)

Tracy? Fletch. How're you doing?

TRACY

So-so. I'm about to go to a
meeting.

FLETCHER (O.S.)

The football thing?

TRACY

Yeah. Can I call you later?

FLETCHER (O.S.)

Of course. I just wanted to make
sure you can make the first board
meeting later this week.

TRACY

Didn't my lawyer tell you? I'm not
available until next week. After
this I gotta go back out to Dayton.

FLETCHER (O.S.)
Next week, huh? OK. No problem.
Glad I called. Have a nice time in
Dayton.

TRACY
Nice time? Have you ever been
there?

Tracy walks to the entrance of the Jets Front Office.

FADE OUT.

EXT. DAYTON BAR - NIGHT

Establishing shot of a typical sports bar.

INT. DAYTON BAR - NIGHT

Tracy and Milton sit together in the bar.

TRACY
You know the Jets are going to get
what they want in the end.

MILTON
Probably. But it won't come free.
I'll fuck over that little prick.
And his asshole father too.

TRACY
How did you get to be so charming,
Milt?

MILTON
Milton.

TRACY
Give me a dollar figure.

MILTON
You trying to bribe me?

TRACY
It's called indemnification.

MILTON
I have shit on his fucking father
that will devastate Bradley.

TRACY

Ah, yes. You mentioned that to me.
But I know you're bluffing.

MILTON

How so?

TRACY

Someone I work with hacked into
your computer. The only
devastating stuff he could find was
a bunch of child pornography.

MILTON

That's a goddamn lie!

TRACY

That's what he told me. And he's
very good at what he does, if you
follow my meaning. He can make a
computer do anything.

MILTON

You fucking whore.

TRACY

Give me a number right now, or I'll
drop a dime on your internet
browsing habits.

MILTON

I have devastating information
about Bradley's old man.

TRACY

You can't be Bradley's agent. Move
on. Find another superstar to rep.
You can do it.

MILTON

I'm ready to go to the New York
fucking Post. It's devas--

Tracy folds her arms and glares at Milton.

MILTON (CONT'D)

--Alright. 200. Thousand.

Tracy sips her cocktail.

TRACY

35 it is. Thousand. Can I buy you
another drink, Milt?

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tracy walks in, places her briefcase on the table beneath the Kandinsky and tosses a Jets jersey across a chair. She checks her answering machine.

ZWIEBEL

(Over answering machine)

Ms. Shepard. This is Bernard Zwiebel. Just a reminder that the board meeting is Thursday at one in the former RodCone Labs office. See you there.

INT. TRACY'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tracy takes a stylish dress from her closet and lays it out on the bed. She retrieves a few pairs of shoes and matches them up to the dress, deciding on the appropriate pair. She makes a phone call.

TRACY

Carla? Sorry for the late call.
Did you confirm my Botox appointment with Dr. Hammond?
Nine? Super. What about the spa?
(beat)
OK. What?
(Laughing)
None of your business little girl.
Thanks. Talk to you later.

Tracy hangs up the phone, looks at the dress-shoes combination and chooses a different pair.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Tracy, looking sharp, steps out of the limo. Her Driver mans the door.

TRACY

Take the rest of the day off.

The Driver smiles and tips his hat. Tracy heads for the entrance.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/LOBBY - DAY

Tracy sizes up the awful conditions of the Office Building Lobby.

She notices that the glass case with the names of various businesses still has the entry "RodCone Labs - Suite 212." Tracy shakes her head in disgust at the piss-poor condition of the lobby, then heads for the stairs.

EXT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Tracy notices the door is missing. Her pace slows. She peers inside, then tentatively walks in.

INT. SUITE 212 - DAY

Suite 212 is a mess, looking as though gutted for renovation. Wearing expensive shoes, Tracy gingerly steps around detritus on the floor. SOUND of scraping O.S.

TRACY

Hello? Is anyone here?

The scraping stops. A CLEANING LADY steps out of a restroom.

TRACY (CONT'D)

Where is everybody? Isn't this
Cuttbate Associates?

CLEANING LADY

(In Spanish with
subtitles)

They left. I'm scraping shit off
the bathroom floor. Would you like
to help me?

TRACY

Do you speak English?

CLEANING LADY

Si. Un poco.

TRACY

Where is everybody?

CLEANING LADY

They leaves. Two weeks ago.

The old Cleaning Lady flashes Tracy a creepy toothless smile. Tracy bolts for the door.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING/STAIRWELL - DAY

Tracy runs down the stairwell, nearly tripping when her heel catches a loose tread.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Tracy runs onto the sidewalk and scans the block. No limo. She walks briskly down the sidewalk.

EXT. BISTRO - DAY

Agitated, Tracy takes a sidewalk table at a BISTRO. A WAITRESS steps up to take an order.

WAITRESS
May I offer--

TRACY
--Bring me a vodka on the rocks.

The Waitress pirouettes and heads back toward the bar. Tracy takes out her cell phone and dials.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Hannah? What the fuck is going on
with Cuttbate Associates!

At the next table a YUPPIE COUPLE with a TODDLER shush Tracy for the use of profanity.

TRACY (CONT'D)
Listen. Something is really wrong.
The office is empty. No one is
there except a cleaning lady.
(beat)
Yeah. Call me back ASAP.

The Waitress returns with the vodka. Tracy hangs up, takes a long drink, and lights a cigarette.

EXT. BISTRO - DAY (LATER)

Tracy sits at the table; an ashtray holds several butts. She nurses a drink. Her hair is mussed. The Toddler plays in Tracy's purse. Tracy's phone RINGS and she answers.

TRACY
Yeah?

INTERCUT with Hannah's Office.

HANNAH
Here's what I have so far. The
Cuttbate website is down. I did a
database search.
(MORE)

HANNAH (CONT'D)

The incorporation filing for
Cuttbate Associates was rejected
earlier in the week.

TRACY

Jesus.

HANNAH

I tried to contact Bernard Zwiebel
and Arthur Andrews but their phones
have been disconnected.

(beat)

Are you OK?

TRACY

Yeah. Go on.

Tracy takes a drink.

HANNAH

The lease on Suite 212 expired
seven months ago. The rent was
paid in cash on a month-by-month
basis since then. The bungalow in
Hamilton Square is currently
available for rent.

TRACY

Good god. Listen, check through
the records of all the people I met
with regarding RodCone Labs and
Cuttbate Associates. Find someone
who can shed some light on this fuh-

-

Tracy glances at the Yuppie Couple who are staring at her.

TRACY (CONT'D)

--ugly mess.

Tracy hangs up and rubs her temples. She lights another
cigarette and sits back, resigned.

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.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

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)

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.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)
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. 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.

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.

(MORE)

RICHARDS (CONT'D)

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.

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

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

MATT

(Into speakerphone)

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

(Into speakerphone)

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

(Into speakerphone)

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

(Into speakerphone)

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. Ciao, Matt.

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. 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 tattoo 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 a 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.

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?

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. 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.

(MORE)

TRACY (CONT'D)

(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. In the middle of 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 a 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 magazine article. 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, Tr--

TRACY

--How much does he want from you?

Marilyn looks askance, checking whether anyone is listening. She scrunches 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)

(MORE)

MARILYN (CONT'D)
So, what do you want from me,
Tracy?

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
(Into speakerphone)
Tracy Shepard. How was your flight
back to Gotham City?

TRACY (O.S.)
(Over speakerphone)
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
(Into speakerphone)
I want you to come. I'll send a
driver for you, Tracy.

TRACY
(Over speakerphone)
Should I buy some Dramamine?

MATT
(Into speakerphone)
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.

EPISODE 4

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, 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"?

(MORE)

TRACY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

(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 it 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 a 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 (O.S.)
 (Over phone)
 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 (O.S.)
 (Over phone)
 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 (O.S.)

(Over phone)

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 (O.S.)

(Over phone)

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 gun.

911 OPERATOR (O.S.)

(Over phone)

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. GEORGE WASHINGTON BRIDGE - NIGHT

Tracy throws the pistol out the window into the river below.

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 (O.S.)

(Over phone)

Matt Blankenschein - leave a 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

(Over 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

(Over 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

(Over TV)

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

(Over TV)

Do the police have a positive ID on the victim?

BALDWIN

(Over TV)

Not yet.

BARRY

(Over TV)

Did the cell phone belong to the victim?

BALDWIN

(Over TV)

We think so.

(MORE)

BALDWIN (CONT'D)

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

BARRY

(Over TV)

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

TRACY

Shit.

BALDWIN

(Over TV)

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

BARRY

(Over TV)

What about the girl?

BALDWIN

(Over TV)

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

BARRY

(Over TV)

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. 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.

(MORE)

MARILYN (CONT'D)

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)

What were you doing there with a gun anyway?

TRACY

Doesn't matter.

(beat)

OK, it was for intimidation. I didn't know it was loaded. Honest. 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. The weapon is gone. No one's going to 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 and stomped on his cock.

MARILYN

What!?

TRACY

We were never there, Marilyn. 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. I need your cooperation.

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.

BACK TO SCENE

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 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 Marilynn.

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.

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.

Tracy smiles. Her cell phone RINGS and she answers.

TRACY

Tracy Shepard.

RICHARDS (O.S.)

(Over phone)

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

TRACY

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

RICHARDS (O.S.)

(Over phone)

I have a solid lead. I came across a coroner's report. It mentioned that the deceased had the type of tattoo you described. 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

(Into phone)

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?

MATT

Something wrong, Trace?

Tracy walks into the Kitchen.

INT. DAD'S BROWNSTONE/KITCHEN - DAY

Tracy cups her hand around the cell phone.

TRACY

I stopped paying you a long time ago. Why are you still working on it?

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 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
Nothing. Sorry to have bothered
you, Ms. Shepard. Have a nice day.
Talk to you, uh, sometime. Uh,
soon.

Richards hangs up.

TRACY
(Into phone)
I didn't mean to sound-- Hello?

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 TO BLACK.