

The Fourth Night

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS (1940) - NIGHT

Heavy rain crashes down. A Cadillac speeds recklessly through the streets. It is being pursued by a Buick Century Sedan.

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

Driving is HENRY MILLER (40s). Suit. Balding. Round rim glasses. Nervously glances into his rearview mirror. The headlights of the Buick reflect off his concerned face.

INT. BUICK - NIGHT

Two mob henchmen struggle to keep visual on the Cadillac through the heavy rain. The passenger grips a Tommy Gun.

INT. CADILLAC - NIGHT

Henry reaches over into a briefcase. He pulls out a handgun. He fumbles with it. He looks up. A guardrail dead ahead!

He slams on the brakes. Skids. Covers his face. Blasts through the guardrail at a very high rate of speed.

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

The Buick screeches to a stop. Both henchmen get out. They can barely see the Cadillac out in the middle of the raging LA River. It is destroyed and almost completely submerged.

HENCHMAN #1
Let's get outta here.

EXT. THE SUNSET CLUB - NIGHT

JOYCE DORRINGTON (20s) - very alluring and exceptionally beautiful - waits under the protection of The Sunset Club marquee to escape the rain.

A taxi pulls up. She opens an umbrella and quickly walks to it. She gets in the backseat.

INT. TAXI - NIGHT

The taxi slows down near an early century apartment building.

JOYCE
Around back, please.

EXT. REAR OF APARTMENT BLDG. - NIGHT

The taxi drops Joyce off at the rear of the apartment building. She opens her umbrella and rushes inside.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joyce enters. Lights stay off. She moves to a window. Peeks out the corner of the curtains. She can barely make out a figure - and the glow of a cigarette - in a car parked at the curb. She picks up her phone and dials 0.

JOYCE
(into phone)
Metro 279, please.

The phone rings repeatedly. No answer. She hangs up.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

A Coroner wagon and detective unit are parked near the now tranquil LA River. Los Angeles Police Detectives DAVID PARKER (30s) - and ROY CALHOUN(40s), African American - stand by as a covered body is carried up on a gurney by two coroner officials.

Detective Calhoun pulls the blanket away from the victim. Repulsed - he grimaces and turns his head. One of the officials hands him a water soaked wallet. He opens it.

DET. PARKER
It's Henry Miller alright.

Detective Parker pulls out a big wad of cash.

DET. CALHOUN
That's a lot of dough.

INT. CAR - DAY

A car pulls to the curb next to the First Bank of Los Angeles. The driver is JOHNNIE WHITMORE (40s). Creepy. Wiry. Unsettling air about him. He keeps a close watch on the bank.

INT. BANK - DAY

SUSAN JOHNSON (20s). Somber. Boxes up the contents of an office desk. She exits the office - passing a man removing HENRY MILLER, PRESIDENT from the frosted glass on the door.

Susan passes another open office door. The frosted glass pane has the name HELEN CALDWELL, PRESIDENT being freshly applied to it. HELEN CALDWELL (30s) - spots Susan and comes out.

SUSAN

Mr. Miller's belongings are boxed up.

HELEN

Take a week off. We'll discuss your new duties when you return.

Helen walks Susan to the front door. She lets Susan out.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Susan steps out of the bank. Helen locks the door behind her. The evening is cold as a big storm creeps in. Susan adjusts her hat. Buttons her coat. Starts walking.

She turns the corner. She hears a car engine. Slight turn of her head. She sees Johnnie following her. He stares at her.

She walks faster. Johnnie keeps pace with her. She darts across the street - and ducks into a large department store.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - NIGHT

Susan looks out the window. Johnnie's car is gone.

EXT. SIDEWALK - CONTINUOUS

Susan comes out of the store. She starts walking. She spots Johnnie as he steps out from a newsstand. Terrified - she turns - and briskly walks down the sidewalk.

She glances behind her. Johnnie's right-hand is concealed in his coat pocket. She darts around a corner. Spots a taxi. Flags it down. The taxi pulls over. Susan gets into the back.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

SUSAN

5690 Edgewood Drive.

Susan glances out the rear window to see a partially shadowed Johnnie standing in the middle of the street under the dim glow of a street lamp - ominously staring at the taxi.

INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Susan enters. She turns on the lights and the radio. She moves over to a corner table and pulls out a small address book. She finds a number. She picks up the phone. Dials 0.

SUSAN

(into phone)

Long distance, please.

INT. BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT

An office door with frosted glass reads STEVEN HAWK PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS. NEW YORK CITY. EST. 1935

INT. STEVEN HAWK PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS - NIGHT

CLAIRE MACDONALD (50s) works at her desk. The phone rings. She answers it.

CLAIRE
(into phone)
Steven Hawk Private Investigations.

INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Susan sits on the sofa as she talks to Claire.

SUSAN
(into phone)
Ever since Henry's death, someone has been following me.
(beat)
Please, Aunt Claire, I'm terrified.
Something bad was going on with Henry.
I need Steven's help.

INT. STEVEN HAWK PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS - NIGHT

CLAIRE
(into phone)
As soon as Steven's in, I'll have him call you. He's just wrapping up a case.

EXT. CHINESE FREIGHTER - NIGHT

A Chinese freighter heads out to sea with the help of a tugboat. The twinkling lights of New York City glide by.

INT. CHINESE FREIGHTER/BELOW DECK - NIGHT

STEVEN HAWK (30s) - ruggedly handsome - is anything but at the moment. He's beaten and sprawled on the floor below deck. He rolls over and gets up on all fours.

He places his left-hand against the wall and shakes off the cobwebs. He struggles to his feet and gets his balance.

STEVEN
You really did it this time, Hawk.

He moves to the door and slowly opens it. He is immediately confronted by an armed crewman - who yells at him in Chinese. At this moment the freighter rocks from the breakwater.

Steven grabs a hold of the door frame. Kicks the man in the face. The man falls. Steven takes his rifle and moves up the corridor.

As he reaches stairs he is confronted by a second crewman. Steven slams him across the face with the rifle - knocking him unconscious. He drops the rifle and starts up the stairs.

EXT. CHINESE FREIGHTER/DECK - CONTINUOUS

Steven cautiously steps out on the deck. New York is getting farther and farther away. A sudden shot rings out - the bullet striking close. Crewmen yell at him in Chinese.

Steven starts running. He is cutoff by crewmen and quickly changes direction. He heads for the starboard side of the freighter. He zig zags as bullets zip past his head.

He jumps off the freighter - splashing into the cold ocean waters. Quickly sinks from view. Several crewmen fire repeatedly at the water.

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - NIGHT

Steven resurfaces. Thickening fog. He hears the sound of an approaching boat. The tugboat is coming in his direction. Powerful spotlights scan the water. Men fire at random.

Steven swims off to the side. As the boat passes him - he pushes himself along the side with his hands. He can see the men directly above shining spotlights and firing into the water. The boat passes.

Steven treads water. Starts struggling. The ding of a buoy in the fog. Another ding. He swims toward the sound. He reaches the buoy. Clings to it. Fog engulfs everything.

Steven shivers badly. He hears the sound of an engine somewhere out in the thick fog. Moments later he makes out the running lights of a fishing trawler.

STEVEN
(yelling)
Hey! I'm over here! Over here!

The trawler is engulfed by fog once again. Reappears.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
(yelling)
Over here! Over here!

Someone on the trawler starts scanning with a spotlight. It shines directly on Steven. He waves at the trawler.

EXT. PACKARD - NIGHT

The car pulls to the curb. Headlights go dark. Engine silenced. A determined Steven emerges. He walks around the corner and approaches an old warehouse.

EXT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Steven creeps up the side of the warehouse. He peers into a dirty window. He sees men loading boxes. He hears the distinct sound of a gun being cocked.

MAN (O.S.)

Keep your hands where I can see 'em.

Steven keeps his arms half-extended in front of him. The man shoves the barrel of his gun against Steven's back as he reaches in and takes Steven's gun.

INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

Steven is roughly pushed into the warehouse at gunpoint. EDWARD THOMPSON (30s) motions to the other men. They leave.

EDWARD

Back so soon, Mr. Hawk.

STEVEN

I don't speak Chinese.

MR. DAVIES (O.S.)

You are becoming quite a nuisance.

WESLEY DAVIES (50s) - walks into the room. He's overweight. Walks with a cane. Wears a hat. Smokes a cigar.

MR. DAVIES (CONT'D)

You are harassing myself and my business.

STEVEN

Which includes hijacking and murder.

MR. DAVIES

I am nothing more...

STEVEN

Than a thief and murderer.

Mr. Davies glares at Steven.

MR. DAVIES

You are in no position to make false accusations.

STEVEN

They're not accusations.

MR. DAVIES

No?

STEVEN

You inherited your father's stores. But you have a little unknown habit... Gambling. The only problem is you are as bad a gambler as you are a crook. To save your stores, you and Edward here devised a plan to hijack trucks and sell the merchandise on the black market. Very profitable by the way. Only your accountant uncovered your operation. He got greedy and demanded a cut or he would go to the police. So you killed him, making it look like a robbery.

MR. DAVIES

Come now, that's a pretty tall tale.

STEVEN

No, it's a fact.

MR. DAVIES

How's that?

STEVEN

You blundered.

Steven pulls out a pair of eye glasses. Mr. Davies expression changes.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

You left your glasses at the scene. Knocked off by Milton who fought back more than you expected.

MR. DAVIES

(sigh)

Come now, Mr. Hawk, those are merely common glasses...

STEVEN

But they're not common glasses. You happen to have a very rare prescription. One in twenty million to be exact. And your frame is one of a kind.

Mr. Davies pulls a gun.

MR. DAVIES

Milton became a nuisance I could no longer afford... just like you.

(beat)

I am afraid I will have to take more appropriate action. But first I want to thank you for bringing your evidence to me, Mr. Hawk. Edward will take possession of the glasses now.

Edward reaches out his hand. Steven grabs it and spins Edward in front of him. Mr. Davies fires - hitting Edward - who collapses. Another shot. Mr. Davies stumbles and collapses.

Steven looks behind him. Detectives stand in the entry. Detective STAN WALKER (40s) - holds his gun. He slides it back into his shoulder holster.

STEVEN

Detective Walker.

DET. WALKER

Cut that one a little close, didn't you?

STEVEN

All that swimming got me riled up.

DET. WALKER

I owe you one.

They look at Mr. Davies and Edward sprawled on the floor.

INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE/BEDROOM - NIGHT

Susan wears a robe. She brushes her hair. Outside the winds and rain howl. The power goes off. Her house is plunged into darkness. She sets her brush down and leaves the room.

LIVING ROOM

Susan is startled by the muffled sound of breaking glass. She hears the sound of footsteps inside her house.

She quickly darts across the living room. She cowers alongside a bookshelf.

The SHADOWED INTRUDER comes into the living room. Tense pause. Then walks into another room. Susan suddenly bolts towards the front door.

She collides with the intruder. There is chaos. Pop! Pop! Pop! Susan collapses to the floor. The intruder bursts through the living room window - disappearing into the backyard and the dark cold night.

INT. STEVEN HAWK PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS - DAY

Steven sits on the edge of Claire's desk. He hangs up the phone.

STEVEN

No answer.

Claire slides an envelope over to Steven.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

What's this?

CLAIRE

Your plane ticket to Los Angeles.

STEVEN

Claire, I can't go to Los Angeles.

Claire slides another envelope to Steven.

CLAIRE

That's your cash.

STEVEN

I know a PI out in Los Angeles. Philip Marlowe. He's top-notch. I can give him a call...

CLAIRE

We're not talking about a regular client. We're talking about my niece. I'm not turning this over to some Philip Marlowe guy. She needs YOUR help.

EXT. DC-3 - DAY

Steven disembarks. He looks dashing in his crisp suit and hat.

EXT. UNION AIR TERMINAL AIRPORT - DAY

Steven has a single suitcase as he flags down a taxi. The cute and spunky female driver - TRACY SHELDON (20s) - pulls over. Steven gets in the back.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

STEVEN

Roosevelt Hotel, please.

Tracy accelerates.

TRACY
Where you from?

STEVEN
New York.

TRACY
I usually don't get people from New York
on vacation.

STEVEN
I'm not exactly on vacation. I'm a
private dick. I'm out here on a case.

TRACY
How exciting. What is the case about?

STEVEN
Not sure yet.

EXT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - DAY

The taxi passes Grauman's Chinese Theater. The marquee reads
THEY DRIVE BY NIGHT George Raft - Ann Sheridan - Ida Lupino -
Humphrey Bogart. The taxi pulls up to the hotel.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Steven pays Tracy - then gives a little extra.

STEVEN
Can you pick me up in an hour?

TRACY
Sure thing.

STEVEN
My name's Steven.

TRACY
Tracy.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Steven washes his face and makes himself a drink. He pulls
out a piece of paper and grabs the phone. Dials 0.

STEVEN
(into phone)
Metro 1710, please.

The phone on the other end rings. No answer. He hangs up.

EXT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - DAY

Steven comes out. Tracy waits outside her taxi. They get in.

INT. TAXI - CONTINUOUS

TRACY

Where to?

STEVEN

5690 Edgewood Drive.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The taxi pulls up to a small house on a well-kept street.

STEVEN

Wait for me.

EXT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Steven repeatedly knocks on the front door. No answer.

INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - DAY

A man wearing gloves and holding a pistol - seen only from the waist down - moves near the door. The doorbell rings.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Steven gets back in.

STEVEN

(beat)

Not home. Take me to The First Bank of
Los Angeles.

INT. BANK - DAY

Steven enters. The bank is busy. He approaches a woman sitting at a desk.

STEVEN

Excuse me. I'm here to see Susan Johnson.

Helen Caldwell - at a nearby desk - takes notice of Steven.

WOMAN

I'm sorry, Susan is on vacation this
week.

STEVEN

Thank you.

As Steven leaves he sees an enlarged photo of Henry Miller on a wood easel by the front door. The photo is draped in black.

INT. TAXI - DAY

Steven gets back into the taxi.

STEVEN

I need to kill some time. Why don't you show me around?

TRACY

Let me drop my taxi off and get my car.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Tracy is in bed. Steven dresses. He takes the car keys and leaves the room. Tracy - half-asleep - smiles and rolls over.

EXT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - LATE AFTERNOON

Steven pulls to the curb in front of Susan's house. Steven gets out. He adjusts his fedora. Walks up to the house. The front door ajar. He slowly pushes it open.

INT. SUSAN'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Steven enters. Immediately notices a large blood stain on the carpet and a boarded-up window that faces the backyard. He is surprised by Detectives Parker and Calhoun.

DET. CALHOUN

Can we help you?

STEVEN

I'm here to see Susan.

Detective Calhoun shows his badge.

DET. CALHOUN

I'm Detective Calhoun, and this is Detective Parker, Los Angeles Police.

DET. PARKER

Who are you?

Steven pulls out his ID. He hands it to Detective Parker.

DET. PARKER (CONT'D)

You're a long way from New York City.

STEVEN

Tell me about it. I thought LA was supposed to be a big city.

DET. PARKER
What's your business here?

Steven looks around the room. Bloody carpet. Boarded-up window. Blood stains on the window frame. The house has been thoroughly ransacked.

STEVEN
I'm on the job. Susan is my client.

DET. PARKER
Then I'm afraid you no longer have a client. Unfortunately, Susan Johnson was found dead here by a concerned neighbor. She was shot.

Steven is clearly stunned by this news.

DET. CALHOUN
Why did she retain your services?

STEVEN
That's privileged information.

DET. PARKER
We could make it police business.

STEVEN
You could try.

Detective Calhoun unbuttons his sport coat.

DET. CALHOUN
Tough guy.

He runs his hand along his belt. Opens his sport coat and exposes his holstered gun.

Steven mimics his exact movements - exposing a liquor flask.

DET. PARKER
We'll contact you in New York.

STEVEN
I'm not going back to New York just yet.
I haven't seen all the sites.

DET. CALHOUN
We'll send you a post card.

STEVEN
I'll get you some crayons.

Detective Calhoun tenses up.

DET. PARKER

If you wanna stick around here, pal, just remember that you're nothing more than a private dick on vacation.

STEVEN

I think your partner needs a vacation.

Detective Calhoun makes a move toward Steven. Detective Parker stops him. Steven leaves. An angry Detective Calhoun watches him.

INT. LOS ANGELES LIBRARY - NIGHT

Steven reads the LA Times stories on Henry Miller's death and Susan's murder.

Henry was thought to be en route to pick up his girlfriend Joyce Dorrington - a singer at both The Coconut Grove and The Sunset Club - when he lost control of his car in the rain and crashed into the LA River.

The story on Susan's murder says her death appears to be a robbery attempt. Steven writes down all the information.

INT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Steven approaches the front desk.

STEVEN

(to desk clerk)

I need to send a telegram to New York.

INT. THE COCONUT GROVE - NIGHT

The nightclub is in full swing. Celebrities. Couples. Solo patrons - dine and dance to the big band music. Steven and Tracy are at the bar enjoying drinks.

Tracy sits while Steven stands and surveys the club. Tracy is dolled up in a dress with her hair done. Steven looks dashing in a tux. Tracy is approached by a man.

MAN

Excuse me, would you like to dance?

Tracy looks at the man - then at Steven.

STEVEN

Okay by me, doll. But don't wander off too far, I don't know how all this is gonna go down.

Tracy and the man hit the dance floor. Steven leans against the bar as he scans the packed room. He receives numerous seductive looks and smiles from women.

The big band finishes its set. Diners and dancing couples applaud. Tracy returns to the bar. An EMCEE walks up to the microphone.

EMCEE

Ladies and gentlemen, The Coconut Grove proudly presents Joyce Dorrington.

Patrons applaud. Joyce comes out on stage. She looks drop dead gorgeous in a long black dress with long silk gloves. She begins to sing a slow, sultry torch song. Her voice is as amazing as her beauty.

She has the audience and staff completely riveted. Steven slowly taps a Lucky strike on the bar. He flicks a match to life and lights his cigarette - keeps his eyes on Joyce.

Joyce steps off the stage and works the room like a pro. She winks at Steven. Shoots him a sexy smile as she passes.

She works the crowd as makes her way back up onto the stage. Finishes her song to enthusiastic applause.

As Joyce leaves the stage - the big band starts a new set as couples once again fill the dance floor.

Steven spots Joyce. She is making her way towards the bar - being congratulated at every turn. He approaches her. Intentionally bumps into her.

JOYCE

Hey!

STEVEN

Sorry. Pardon me.

JOYCE

You always bump into people?

STEVEN

I only need a moment of your time.

JOYCE

You've already had a moment of my time...?

STEVEN

Steven Hawk.

JOYCE

What is it you want, Mr. Hawk?

STEVEN

I'd like to buy you a drink.

JOYCE

Many men want to buy me drinks, but very few are successful.

STEVEN

Maybe after we dance.

JOYCE

Dance? We're not...

Steven pulls Joyce on the dance floor before she can decline. Steven impresses her with his dancing.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

You have some smooth moves, Mr. Hawk.

STEVEN

It comes from dodging bullets.

JOYCE

You a gangster?

STEVEN

No. I'm a PI from New York.

JOYCE

Then I'm afraid you're three thousand miles too far to the left.

STEVEN

I'm out here working on a case. The niece of my secretary was murdered.

JOYCE

Sorry to hear that.

STEVEN

She was Henry Miller's personal secretary. She was murdered two days after his death. I just can't figure out why anyone would want her dead.

JOYCE

(cold)

Have a good trip back to New York.

She starts to pull away. Steven clamps his fingers tight on her left-hand as they continue to dance.

He pulls her close to him with his arm along the small of her back. He holds her body very tight against his.

STEVEN
Keep dancin', doll.

JOYCE
Listen...

STEVEN
No... YOU listen. My client was murdered, and I think it had something to do with Henry Miller.

JOYCE
What is it you want from me?

STEVEN
I want to know what Henry Miller was involved in? When Susan contacted me she was in fear for her life. She thought Henry was in trouble before his death.

JOYCE
Henry's death was very traumatic.

STEVEN
I can tell. You seem all broken up.

JOYCE
People grieve in different ways.

STEVEN
You mask your grief well.

JOYCE
Henry was a kind and gentle person, so if you'll excuse me.

Joyce pulls away. She disappears into the sea of dancing couples. Steven watches her - then heads back to the bar.

As Steven orders a drink he is unknowingly being watched by a smitten Joyce. Steven spots a mobster type at the end of the bar. He looks at him. The man looks away. Steven downs his drink. He then goes over to Tracy - who's dancing.

STEVEN
Think I've worn out my welcome.

They head for the door. They stop at the coat check and get their coats. Steven sees the man walking their way.

EXT. THE COCONUT GROVE - CONTINUOUS

Steven and Tracy exit the club and hurriedly get back to Tracy's car. Steven sees the same man heading their way.

STEVEN

I don't think he wants to chat.

INT. TRACY'S CAR - NIGHT

Steven looks out the rear window. A car tails them.

STEVEN

We got a tail.

Tracy guns it. Weaves recklessly through traffic. She just beats a red light. Speeds up Wilshire. Turns a few blocks up.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Steven enters his room. He removes his jacket and bow tie. Makes himself a drink. Turns on the radio and paces.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Tracy's car pulls to the curb in front of her house.

INT. TRACY'S CAR - NIGHT

Tracy kills the engine. She drops her keys onto the floor board. Just as she leans down to retrieve them her car is riddled with bullets from a Tommy Gun.

She lays perfectly still across her front seat - covered in shattered glass. She hears a car speed away.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Steven is awakened by frantic knocking at his door.

TRACY (O.S.)

Steven! Steven, please!

Steven turns on the lights. He puts on a robe and opens the door. Tracy rushes in. She hugs him tightly.

STEVEN

What's up, doll? You're shaking like a leaf.

TRACY

They tried to kill me.

STEVEN

Who?

TRACY

I don't know. They were waiting for me across the street from my house when I pulled up.

Steven looks her over.

STEVEN

You hurt?

TRACY

(shakes head)

No.

STEVEN

This is my fault. I've been driving your car.

TRACY

Oh Steven, what am I going to do?

STEVEN

We need to get you out of LA as quickly as possible.

TRACY

I don't have anywhere to go.

INT. UNION STATION - DAY

Steven and Tracy stand next to a train.

STEVEN

When you get to New York Claire will meet you. She'll set you up and take you over to John at the cab company.

TRACY

Can't you come, Steven?

STEVEN

I have things to finish here.

She hugs Steven and boards the train.

INT. THE COCONUT GROVE - NIGHT

The club is in full swing. Steven sits at a table enjoying a dinner and drink. Joyce sings. The audience is completely riveted.

She sits on Steven's lap and sings directly to him. She gets up. Slips a piece of paper inside his breast pocket.

She works the rest of the room as she makes her way back to the stage. Steven pulls out the piece of paper. Joyce has written "Meet me in the lot after the show".

EXT. THE COCONUT GROVE - NIGHT

Steven buttons his coat as he walks into the parking lot. He hears steps. He turns around to see a beautiful and sexy Latina woman. Just as quick: BLACK.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT/BEDROOM - MORNING

The bright morning sun shines through the bedroom window. Steven slowly wakes up. He is wearing only his underwear. He carefully sits up.

JOYCE (O.S.)
Good morning.

Steven looks over to see Joyce standing next to the bed. She is dressed in a very revealing nightgown.

STEVEN
What are you...?

JOYCE
You're at my place.

Joyce climbs onto her bed. She kisses him.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
You were found unconscious out in the parking lot.

Steven rubs his jaw and winces.

STEVEN
Someone didn't appreciate me talking to you.

JOYCE
(smiles)
People look out for me.

She slowly massages Steven's shoulders letting her breasts rub against his back.

STEVEN
Yeah, everyone seems real friendly around here.

The whistling of a water pot can be heard.

JOYCE
You want some coffee?

STEVEN
Do I have a choice?

Joyce climbs off the bed. Allows her nightgown to hike up above her waist - revealing her underwear. She walks out of the room. Glances back - smiles and winks at Steven.

KITCHEN

Joyce makes two cups of coffee. She puts the cups on a serving tray with sugar and milk.

BEDROOM

Joyce walks back to her bedroom. Steven is gone. Her window is open. She sets the tray down and looks out her window.

The fire escape is pulled down. Steven walks down the street. Joyce is clearly frustrated. Frowns.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Steven enters the emergency room. He approaches the nurse station.

NURSE
(smiles)
Can I help you?

Steven takes off his hat. He shows his identification.

STEVEN
I hope so. I need some information.
I need to know if a gunshot victim was
brought in and treated here late Thursday
night or early Friday morning?

NURSE
Must be important for you to come all the
way out here from New York.

She looks through files.

NURSE (CONT'D)
Sorry, but we had no gunshot victim.

EXT. HENRY MILLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steven climbs over a backyard wall. He approaches the back door. He breaks out a small glass window pane on the door. He reaches inside and unlocks the door. He enters the house.

INT. HENRY MILLER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Steven slowly walks through Henry's house. A single living room lamp is on - but the house remains dark and ominous. It has been thoroughly ransacked.

A portrait of Henry Miller hangs on the wall in the living room. Steven tilts the portrait away from the wall and looks behind it. He then sifts through numerous items strewn about.

STUDY

Steven clicks on the desk lamp. Items and papers are strewn on top of the desk. He opens two small desk drawers. Empty. The long drawer is pulled two thirds of the way out.

He tries to pull it out. It's stuck. He yanks hard several times. The drawer finally comes out with a pop. He sees a torn piece of fiber board sitting in the drawer.

He reaches in and feels the underside of the desk top. He kneels down and looks into the drawer slot. He pulls out the rest of the fiber board.

He looks again - and notices something flat taped to the underside of the desk top. He reaches in and pulls out a sealed manila envelope.

He opens the envelope. He pulls out a bank file - which lists dummy account names. Numbers. The large dollar amount in each account. Next to each account are coded names.

STEVEN

Well, well, Henry Miller. Money
laundering is a dangerous business.

He slips the papers back into the envelope. Puts the desk back the way he found it. He clicks off the desk lamp. Makes his way back into the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Steven searches the room. He hears the sound of a car engine. Then the sound of two car doors shut.

He slips the envelope inside his sport coat. He quickly makes his way to the separate dining room - entering through an arched entrance.

DINING ROOM

As he hears the front door open. Steven slams into the dining room table. The envelope slips from his sport coat. He doesn't notice until he reaches the back door.

He turns back to find the envelope. He spots it on the dining room floor - just under the end of the table.

Just as he starts to go back for it - he hears two male voices. He ducks into the small coat closet next to the back door.

COAT CLOSET

Steven hears two male voices. He looks into the dark dining room. He kneels down and starts to crawl into the room.

He hears one of the men walk into the dining room. Sees light from a flashlight. He darts back out of view.

He sees the moving flashlight beam. Hears the man opening China cabinets. Knocking things to the floor. Moving around.

He sees the flashlight beam move back towards the front of the house. He darts into the dining room and grabs the manila envelope. He makes a quick exit out the back door.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Steven reads the bank file. On a small note pad he writes down the dummy account names, addresses, and dollar amounts. He then rips out the piece of paper. He folds it the long way then slips it into the inner liner of his fedora.

INT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Steven returns to the hotel. He approaches the desk clerk.

DESK CLERK

Good evening, Mr. Hawk.

Steven pulls out the manila envelope. He slides it across the desk to the clerk with a twenty-dollar bill - invoking a surprised response from the clerk.

STEVEN

I need that put somewhere confidential and safe.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Steven enters his darkened room. Someone in the shadows strikes a match - lights a cigarette.

Steven pulls his gun as he flips on the lights. It's Joyce. She lounges on the sofa wearing a very sexy dress.

JOYCE

Wrong gun, Mr. Hawk.

Steven slowly lowers his gun. Joyce gets up and moves over to the bar. She mixes two drinks.

JOYCE (CONT'D)

You travel in style. I like that.

STEVEN

Dames like you always do.

She hands him a drink.

JOYCE

I don't appreciate it when someone walks out on me.

STEVEN

I was busy.

JOYCE

You'll have to make it up to me.

STEVEN

How optimistic of you.

Joyce turns on the radio. She motions Steven over to her.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I'm fine where I'm at.

JOYCE

Are you afraid of me?

STEVEN

No.

JOYCE

I'm harmless you know.

STEVEN

Yeah, like a loaded gun.

JOYCE

You don't like me very much, do you?

STEVEN

No.

JOYCE
Why not?

STEVEN
You bother me.

JOYCE
(surprised)
I bother you?

STEVEN
Just like a fly buzzing around my head.

JOYCE
I'm really cute you know.

STEVEN
Yeah, doll... I got eyes.

JOYCE
Men tell me I'm cute all the time.

STEVEN
No one's cuter than me.

Joyce saunters over to him. They begin to dance.

JOYCE
I like you.

Joyce kisses him - really laying one on him. Steven casually works her toward the door.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
I want more.

STEVEN
A dame like you always wants more.

Steven kisses her - a knee-wobbling kiss. At the same time he reaches back opens the door - slightly maneuvering Joyce out into the hallway.

HALLWAY

Steven shuts and locks the door before Joyce can regain her composure. She pounds on the door then storms away.

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - MORNING

The city comes alive for another day. People go to work. Papers are being delivered. Milkmen are making their rounds.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

Steven dresses. He looks out his hotel window. Notices a window across the street is broken. Jagged pieces of glass protrude from the window frame. He looks hard at it, then snaps his fingers.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Steven has returned to the hospital. He lingers near the nurses station until the same nurse comes on shift.

STEVEN

Hi. Remember me?

NURSE

The New York PI.

STEVEN

I know I'm really pushing it here, but I've been looking for a gunshot victim.

Steven slides a ten dollar bill to her.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

When I should have been looking for someone with a bad laceration.

She slides the ten back over to him.

NURSE

Give me a minute.

She goes into another room. She returns with a file.

NURSE (CONT'D)

This guy came in late last Thursday. He had a severe laceration on his left-arm.

Steven reads the file and writes down the information.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Steven exits the hospital and returns to his car. He drives out of the parking lot. The same two henchmen who chased Henry are waiting. They follow him in the same Buick.

INT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY

Steven glances into his rearview mirror and notices the Buick tailing him. He casually makes a right turn. The Buick follows. He makes a left turn. The Buick pulls back a bit. Continues to follow him.

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - DAY

A freight train speeds towards the crossing. The warning lights flash.

INT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY

Steven starts to brake and slow down as the train barrels down on the crossing. He suddenly accelerates.

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - DAY

Steven's car races across the railroad tracks just seconds before the train whizzes across the intersection.

INT. BUICK - DAY

The driver waits impatiently for the train to clear. The passenger grips a Tommy Gun. The train clears the crossing. The driver accelerates. No sign of Steven.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Steven pulls out from behind a gas station. He falls in behind the Buick.

INT. BUICK - DAY

The driver glances into his rearview mirror.

HENCHMAN #1
We've been made.

INT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY

The Buick speeds away. Steven punches the accelerator. He stays close on their tail.

EXT. LOS ANGELES STREETS - DAY

The two cars speed towards downtown. The traffic becomes bogged down on the new streets.

INT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY

The Buick in front of him brakes and slows.

INT. BUICK - DAY

HENCHMAN #1
Take him out.

The passenger grabs his Tommy Gun. He takes aims at Steven's car and fires.

INT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY

Bullets spray everywhere, shattering Steven's passenger window and windshield. He turns the wheel. Hits the gas. Speeds into an alley. Skids to a quick stop.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Steven rolls out of his car. He comes up with his gun ready. He aims it across the hood of his car. The Buick turns and disappears down a busy street.

INT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY

Steven drives the bullet-riddled car down a residential street. He pulls to the curb.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Steven looks at the address register. Walks up the stairs to the second floor. He finds the apartment he is looking for.

He pulls his gun. He stands to the side of the door. He firmly taps on the door several times.

STEVEN

Postman.

He gets no response. Presses his ear to the door. Hears no one. He walks away.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Steven makes his way around to the rear of the building. He pulls down the fire escape and makes his way up it. He sees an open window. He climbs into the apartment.

INT. JOHNNIE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steven slowly makes his way around the apartment. He stops. He has found Johnnie Whitmore - the man who followed and murdered Susan.

He's dead. There is obvious and severe bruising on his neck. His left-arm is heavily bandaged. It's clear he has been dead for several days... Discoloration. Rigor mortis. Ripe.

STEVEN

And I thought my day was going bad.

He slips his shoes and socks off. He slides his socks over his hands. He carefully searches Johnnie's body.

He finds his wallet. He looks through the wallet. He finds a piece of paper with a phone number written in feminine writing. He slips the number into his own pocket.

He pulls out his mini note pad. He copies the information from Johnnie's Illinois Driver License. Slips Johnnie's wallet back where he found it.

He notices that Johnnie is sitting against something white. Barely in view. He quickly moves back over to Johnnie's body.

He turns his head away and grimaces as he tilts Johnnie's body to the left. The body tilts like a stiff board. He pulls the item from behind the body.

He tilts Johnnie's body back into its original position. He then looks at the item. It is a long torn piece of white silk. He slips it into his own pocket.

INT. JOHNNIES'S APARTMENT - DAY

Steven sits at the small kitchen table. Homicide detectives work the crime scene. A detective briefs Detectives Calhoun and Parker as they arrive. They approach Steven.

DET. CALHOUN

Well, I gotta tell ya. I've run into you twice, and that's two times too many.

STEVEN

Likewise.

DET. CALHOUN

How come every time someone dies, you show up.

STEVEN

Just lucky I guess.

Detective Calhoun sticks his finger in Steven's face.

DET. CALHOUN

Don't get smart with me. You're in the apartment of a homicide. Now what are you doing here?

STEVEN

I told you, I'm on the job. Our stiff friend over there is the man who murdered Susan Johnson.

DET. PARKER

And you know for a fact?

STEVEN

Check his arm wound, then check it against the blood on the window at Susan's house. He's your man.

DET. PARKER

Anything else?

STEVEN

Personally, I'd be a little worried. You have three deaths in a week, and they're all somehow related to one another.

DET. PARKER

Thanks for the tip.

DET. CALHOUN

Tell me, Hawk. That your blasted heap downstairs?

STEVEN

Yeah.

DET. CALHOUN

What happened?

STEVEN

I got in the way of some bullets.

DET. PARKER

You're luck's gonna run out sooner than you think.

STEVEN

You're probably right.

Steven stands up. He grabs his hat.

DET. CALHOUN

Where the hell do you think you're going?

STEVEN

Back to my hotel.

DET. CALHOUN

How about I lock you up?

STEVEN

For what? Reporting a dead body?

(shakes head)

Please detective... don't waste my time.

Detective Calhoun grabs Steven's arm.

DET. CALHOUN
If I were you, I'd pack my bags and quit
while I was still ahead.

STEVEN
Nice to know I'm ahead.

Steven goes to leave. The door is jammed by a malfunctioning lock. Detective Parker comes over. He pulls up on the door and unlatches the lock. He opens the door and puts his hand on Steven's shoulder.

DET. PARKER
If I was you, Hawk, I'd invest in some
life insurance.

Steven makes a quick exit.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Steven enters the room. Turns on the lights. He checks the room. Makes himself a drink. He sits in a chair and pulls out the piece of paper from Johnnie's wallet. He picks up the phone receiver and dials 0.

STEVEN
(into phone)
Poplar 3958, please.

The phone rings. A woman answers it. He immediately hangs up and sips his drink.

INT. BANK - DAY

Steven enters the bank. He talks to a woman at a desk. She points to Helen Caldwell. He approaches Helen.

STEVEN
Excuse me, Helen Caldwell?

HELEN
Yes. Can I help you?

Steven slightly reacts to her when she answers him. He shows her his identification.

STEVEN
I would like a word with you regarding
Susan Johnson.

HELEN
Let's go into my office.

HELEN'S OFFICE

Helen escorts Steven into her office. She shuts the door. Gestures to a chair.

HELEN

Have a seat.

Steven sits down. Helen sits behind her desk.

HELEN (CONT'D)

What is it I can do for you today, Mr. Hawk?

STEVEN

I'm out here from New York to investigate Susan Johnson's murder. I understand that just prior to her murder, her boss, Henry Miller, was fatally injured in an automobile accident.

HELEN

That's correct, a very unfortunate coincidence. Everyone here at the bank has taken the losses very hard.

STEVEN

Was there anything going on with Mr. Miller which might have put Susan's life in danger?

HELEN

(shakes head)

Not to my knowledge. I've only worked here for two months. I discovered some minor discrepancies in some of the paperwork, but other than that, everything else seems to be in order.

(beat)

Mr. Miller's reputation was impeccable.

STEVEN

Do you have any idea why someone would want to harm Susan?

HELEN

The police believe it was an attempted robbery. Other than that, I don't know why anyone would want to harm her. Like I said, I have only worked at this bank for a short time, but as far as I could tell, Susan was a sweet girl, and she was well liked.

STEVEN

Doesn't it strike you as very odd that two employees of this bank have met untimely deaths in a week?

HELEN

I find it to be quite disturbing. But I leave the investigating up to the police. I am sure if the deaths are related, they'll find out the reason.

Steven stands up. He shakes Helen's hand.

STEVEN

Thank you for your time.

Steven starts to leave the office. He stops briefly. Turns back to Helen.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

One more thing. Do you know a guy named Johnnie Whitmore?

HELEN

No. Never heard of him.

STEVEN

Evidently no one has. Thank you.

Steven leaves the office.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Steven sits at the bar. He slowly works on a drink. Deep in thought. He doodles endlessly on a napkin.

He has written Henry, Susan, Joyce, Johnnie with arrows to each name and switched around. He writes a big \$. Taps the pen on the paper.

INT. CAR - DAY

Steven drives a different car. He holds a piece of paper that he wrote the addresses of the dummy accounts on. This address is a vacant rundown building. He marks it off the list.

INT. CAR - DAY

Steven stops at another address. This one is a vacant field. He marks it off the list.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Steven leans against his car and looks at a cemetery. He pulls out the list and stares at it. He marks the address off the list. It is the seventh one he has marked off.

He pulls out a book of matches and flicks a match to life. He burns the paper, holding it as long as he can, then lets it drop to the ground where it burns itself out.

STEVEN

Come on, think.

INT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Steven enters. The desk clerk motions him over.

DESK CLERK

Good evening, Mr. Hawk. A package arrived for you from New York.

The clerk hands him a small box. It's from his office. He unwraps and opens it. An envelope inside. He peeks inside. It's money.

The desk clerk casually motions with his eyes toward a man in the lobby who is sitting and reading a newspaper.

STEVEN

How long has he been here?

DESK CLERK

A few hours.

Steven slides the clerk a five dollar bill.

ELEVATOR

Steven enters. He sees the man casually get up as the door shuts. Steven rides the elevator a few floors. Stops. Exits.

HALLWAY

The man from the lobby enters via the stairs. He walks down the quiet hallway until he stops at Steven's room. He listens at the door. He can hear big band music playing on the radio.

He looks up and down the hallway. He picks the door lock. He pulls out a handgun with a silencer and slowly enters Steven's room.

HOTEL ROOM

Steven appears behind him in the doorway. The man turns. Steven punches him hard in the face.

The man is knocked off his feet and loses his gun. He reaches for it. Steven kicks him the face. Steven grabs the gun and slides it into his pocket.

He yanks the man into a chair and throws ice water into his face. The man starts to come around. Steven takes his wallet and looks inside. He is Mickey Launter (34). Steven tosses the wallet back to him.

STEVEN

Who sent you?

MICKEY

Nobody. I'm just looking for a score.

Steven grabs Mickey and pulls him over to the window. He flings the window open and starts to push Mickey out of it. Mickey quickly gives in.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Okay, okay... Take it easy, mister.

STEVEN

Who sent you?

INT. THE SUNSET CLUB - NIGHT

Steven drags Mickey into the packed club by the collar. It's in full swing. Big band music. Dancing. There is more of a mob element and festive atmosphere than The Coconut Grove.

Mickey points at ELONZO ALVEREZ (50s). He's sitting at a booth with another man and five stunning Latina women - one of whom is the same woman Steven encountered in the parking lot of The Coconut Grove.

STEVEN

Come on, tough guy.

Steven forcibly escorts Mickey up to the Elonzo's table. Shoves him up to it. The women shoot Steven seductive looks.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I brought your boy back.

Mickey quietly sits on the end. Elonzo is clearly angered.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Don't be too hard on him.

ELONZO
Won't you sit and join us?

STEVEN
I'll stand. The air is cleaner up here.

Steven pulls out Mickey's gun. He empties the bullets -
tosses the gun hard at Elonzo.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
If you keep sending people to kill me,
you're gonna run out of guns.

ELONZO
You take a lot of chances, Mr. Hawk.

STEVEN
I get paid to.

ELONZO
But your client is dead.

STEVEN
I got principles.

ELONZO
I'm sorry.

Steven looks at the Latina he encountered in the parking lot
of The Coconut Grove. He rubs his jaw. She seductively runs
her tongue along her lips.

STEVEN
Principles can be a painful thing.

ELONZO
You're playing a dangerous game, Mr.
Hawk... and you're out of your league.

STEVEN
That's just it. I'm not playing any game.
I am just trying to find out why my
client was murdered.
(leans in)
But everyone seems hell bent on pointing
guns at me and running me out of town. I
don't like that much. Makes me want to
stick around.

ELONZO
It's better to be civilized.

STEVEN
So I've heard.

ELONZO

I don't like violence, but I find it a necessary evil.

STEVEN

Like trying to kill me?

ELONZO

Nothing personal, Mr. Hawk. You are simply in the way.

STEVEN

Of what?

ELONZO

I doubt you would be very cooperative in helping us get what we want.

STEVEN

Which is?

ELONZO

The money Mr. Miller owed me.

STEVEN

Last time I checked, Henry was dead.

ELONZO

That does pose a problem.

STEVEN

You said us and we. Who else did Miller owe money to?

Elonzo sips his drink. He gives a half-hearted chuckle.

ELONZO

Come now, Mr. Hawk, we both understand the less you know is healthier for both of us. I will say there is a desire for the heat being taken off this case, especially in regards to Henry Miller.

Steven looks at the women sitting with Elonzo.

STEVEN

I figured you for a smarter businessman.

ELONZO

Sometimes the con is conned. But there are two things people will always want... booze and broads.

A waitress passes by - Steven grabs a glass of bourbon from her tray and downs it in one swallow.

STEVEN
You forgot money.

ELONZO
That's a given. Without money you don't have the other two.

Steven sets the glass back on the tray.

STEVEN
True...
(winks at the women)
Unless you're good-looking.
(to waitress)
He'll pay for it.

Elonzo takes a puff from his cigar and stares coldly as Steven disappears through the throng of dancing couples.

EXT. THE SUNSET CLUB - CONTINUOUS

Steven exits the club. He adjusts his hat and buttons his coat. As he walks past an alley: BLACK.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Steven wakes up. He slowly sits up, wincing badly. He gets his bearings and surveys the jail cell.

STEVEN
This should be interesting.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

Mob goons search Steven's room. Come up empty-handed.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Steven is escorted into the room. Detectives Calhoun and Parker are waiting for him. Steven just shakes his head.

STEVEN
Don't you guys have a hobby?

DET. PARKER
Sit down.

Detective Parker kicks a chair out. Steven sits down.

STEVEN

Anyone going to fill me in on why I'm here?

DET. PARKER

Okay, we'll play.

STEVEN

Play what? I left the club and got blind sided. People in this town seem to think I'm a punching bag.

DET. CALHOUN

You know a guy named Mickey?

STEVEN

Yeah, I know who he is.

DET. CALHOUN

Why did you shoot him?

Steven appears confused.

STEVEN

Who?

DET. CALHOUN

Mickey.

STEVEN

Mickey?

DET. PARKER

Yeah... Like the mouse.

STEVEN

(shakes head)

I didn't shoot anybody. Mickey was Alonzo's problem, not mine.

Detective Calhoun places a plastic bag on the table. In it are a .38 and two shell casings.

DET. CALHOUN

Then please explain what this gun was doing gripped firmly in your right-hand, with Mickey dead a few feet from you.

STEVEN

I shoot left-handed. And that's not even my gun.

DET. PARKER

We have enough to charge you with murder.

STEVEN
It won't stick...
(emphasizing)
And you know it.

Detective Calhoun leans close.

DET. CALHOUN
We'll just see about that.

STEVEN
(rubs forehead)
I seem to have struck a raw nerve, but I
didn't kill anyone, and you know it.
There's already enough stiffies involved in
this case, and I don't want to add to the
body count.

DET. CALHOUN
We have you holding the smoking gun.
(leans in)
And that makes you suspect numero uno.

STEVEN
Still can't count past one?

Detective Calhoun leans in like he is going to punch Steven.
Detective Parker motions to the jailer.

DET. PARKER
Take him back to his cell.

The jailer takes Steven by the arm.

DET. CALHOUN
And, Hawk... You better get comfortable,
because you're going to be staying with
us for a while.

The jailer escorts Steven from the room.

DET. PARKER
He's right, it won't stick.

DET. CALHOUN
Yeah, but he's gonna cool his heels here
until we solve this case.

INT. JAIL/CELL - NIGHT

Steven sleeps on the lower bunk. He stirs. His face flinches
like he is reacting to something. He opens his eyes and looks
at his cell door.

An extremely CREEPY INMATE is standing outside his cell. He leans against the bars and smokes a cigarette. He stares at Steven for what seems like an eternity.

He flicks his cigarette butt into the cell, chuckles evilly, and walks away. Steven sits up. He glances at the cigarette butt.

He gets up and walks to the bars. He glances right, seeing no one. He glances left, seeing no one. He looks back right. The creepy inmate's face is directly on the other side of the bars.

Startled - Steven steps back. The creepy inmate appears jittery. Talks in a slight hyper tone.

 CREEPY INMATE

You're jumpy. I like that. I like that a lot. No one here to help you, Hawk.

 (sinister chuckle)

You don't listen too well. No... You don't listen. But you'll listen to me. Yes, sir. You'll listen real good. I'm going to make sure of that, Hawk.

 STEVEN

Who the hell are you? How do you know my name?

 CREEPY INMATE

 (sinister chuckle)

I'll be seeing you again, Hawk. You and me got an appointment. Just you and me. You won't be so tough after that.

He smiles a demented smile and walks away. Steven paces his cell. Scratches his head.

INT. STEVEN HAWK PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS - DAY

Claire is on the phone.

 CLAIRE

 (into phone)

This is Claire McDonald again. This is the third day I've called. I'm trying to reach Steven Hawk.

 (beat)

Okay, when he returns please tell him to call me. Thank you.

Claire hangs up. Sighs heavily.

INT. JAIL/CAFETERIA - DAY

Dozens of inmates eat dinner chow - Steven included. He finishes his meal. He carries his tray and utensils up to a return table. A guard makes sure he returns the tray and utensils.

Steven then steps in the exit line. Each inmate leaving the cafeteria is patted down. Steven spots the creepy inmate about six inmates ahead of him.

The creepy inmate looks back at Steven... His eyes insane looking. A demented smile plastered on his face.

Steven steps out of line. His shirt is quickly grabbed. He looks up. The guard is in his face.

GUARD

Where do you think you're going?

STEVEN

Nowhere.

GUARD

Exactly.

The guard pushes Steven back in line.

GUARD (CONT'D)

Stay in line.

Steven gets to the front of the line. Quick pat down. The barred door slides open.

DOOR GUARD

Get movin'.

JAIL CORRIDOR

Steven leaves the cafeteria. The barred door behind him slides shut with a resounding clang. He looks up the long corridor. It is empty.

Steven walks up the corridor. He is uncharacteristically nervous. He scans everything around him. He comes to an intersecting corridor. He slows, peeks down it, all clear.

He keeps walking. A door suddenly opens - startling him. It is two guards. They walk past Steven going in the opposite direction.

Steven comes to a second intersecting corridor. He hesitates, peeks around it, all clear. He continues on.

He can hear the clanging of closing cell doors. The noise gets louder. He is close to the cell block.

Steven reaches the cell block. He is patted a second time. The door to the cell block slides open. He passes through.

CELL BLOCK

Steven is extra alert, uncharacteristically jittery and nervous. He quickly climbs the stairs to his third floor block. He heads for his cell. He made it back unscathed.

CELL

Steven walks through his open cell door. A tightly wound towel is pulled hard against his neck. The creepy inmate pulls back as hard as possible. Steven's eyes widen. He panics and grabs at the tightly wound towel.

Steven tries in vain to loosen the force of the towel against his throat. No use. The inmate pulls back hard. Steven spins and swings his arms behind him. No good.

CREEPY INMATE

You were told to go back to New York.
You're sticking your nose in other
people's business... and they really
don't like it.

Steven is in a full-blown panic. He spins, struggles, and fights back. No use. His face is turning blue. His eyes start to roll back.

He is able to turn the inmate's back to the bars. He thrusts his body back - slamming the inmate hard into the bars. They bounce off the bars. No luck. Steven does it again - this time much harder.

The stunned inmate loosens his grip on the towel. Steven stumbles toward the cell bunk beds. He reaches his right-arm back around the creepy inmate's head.

He slams the inmate's forehead into the metal bed frame. The towel falls. He slams the inmate's forehead into the metal frame again. The dazed inmate staggers back. Blood flows from a forehead wound.

Steven collapses to the floor - unconscious. The creepy inmate struggles - but manages to pick up the towel. He twists it into a tight rope again. He moves to Steven.

GUARD (O.S.)

What's going on here?!

The creepy inmate looks at the guard. He firmly grips the twisted towel. He looks like a lunatic. Demented chuckle. He tries to strangle Steven right in front of the guard.

Two guards rush in. They grab the creepy inmate. He fights and struggles. He breaks free. He bolts from the cell and leaps off the third floor walkway.

The guards roll Steven over. He is unconscious. His neck is red and bruised. The strangulation line is clear.

GUARD #1

We need to get him to the infirmary
quick!

INT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL/HALLWAY - DAY

Steven's room door opens. Joyce comes out. She walks to the elevator and waits. The elevator comes. The operator slides the door open. Detectives Calhoun and Parker exit as Joyce enters. No acknowledgment or recognition.

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

A taxi pulls up to police headquarters. Joyce gets out and goes inside. The Buick with two henchmen inside pulls to the curb directly across the street. The same two men who chased Henry and shot at Steven.

INT. JAIL/INFIRMARY - DAY

Steven sits on an examination table. The doctor checks his bruised and discolored neck.

DOCTOR

How's the throat?

STEVEN

Better, doc.

DOCTOR

Open, please.

Steven opens his mouth. The doctor shines a pen light into it. Checks it.

DET. PARKER (O.S.)

How is he?

They look over to see Detective Parker. He holds Steven's hat.

DOCTOR

Sore, but he'll live.

Detective Parker motions for the doctor to leave. He does. Steven rubs his sore neck.

DET. PARKER
A witness came forward. For the moment
you're free to go.

Steven gets up and takes hold of his hat. Detective Parker holds onto the other end.

DET. PARKER (CONT'D)
I said for the moment. Don't be leaving
town.

Detective Parker lets go of Steven's hat.

STEVEN
First everyone is trying to run me out of
town, now you want me to stay. Maybe I
should rent?

DET. PARKER
You know, Hawk, you have a way of really
getting on my nerves.

STEVEN
Maybe you need another line of work.

DET. PARKER
I wouldn't be so cocky. You're stepping
over that line.

STEVEN
Take it easy, detective. We're both on
the same side here, just working it from
different angles.

DET. PARKER
Let's go.

They walk out of the infirmary.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Steven has dressed in a fresh suit. He grabs a small holster. He unclips a pouch on the holster and pulls out a single shot Derringer. He checks to make sure it's loaded.

INT. THE SUNSET CLUB - NIGHT

The club is packed. Dancing couples crowd the dance floor as Joyce performs. Steven walks in. There is a more intense and serious air about him.

Joyce spots him. Steven spots Elonzo - who is sitting at a booth with his usual crowd. Steven pushes his way through the dancing couples. Elonzo spots him and tenses up.

Steven gets within a few feet of Elonzo - he is cut off by Joyce. She gently puts her hand on his chest. She playfully makes him part of her routine.

She grabs his tie and pulls him close to her. As she sings directly to him - she casually reaches inside his sport coat and feels around. She removes his Derringer. She keeps the Derringer concealed in her gloved hand.

She then takes Steven's hat. She skillfully slides the Derringer inside the hat. She puts the hat on her head and playfully pushes herself away from Steven.

She wears the hat for the rest of her song as she moves around the room and back up onto the stage. She finishes her set. She looks for Steven. He is gone.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Joyce paces the room. Her radio is on. She nervously works on a drink. There is a knock on her door. She reacts, moves to the door, and slowly opens it. Steven enters.

JOYCE

Well, Mr. Hawk, trouble seems to follow you like stench follows death.

STEVEN

Maybe I should shower more often.

JOYCE

How did you end up in the clink?

STEVEN

I have a few ideas.

Steven looks around the nicely furnished apartment as Joyce makes him a drink. His hat and Derringer sit on a side stand. He goes over and collects them.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I should have stuck around last time. Looks like you are doing very well.

JOYCE

I like nice things.

STEVEN

Nice and shiny I bet.

Joyce hands Steven his drink.

JOYCE
You don't approve?

STEVEN
Depends.

JOYCE
I never had nice things growing up in
Eureka. Henry was a generous man.

STEVEN
With other people's money.

JOYCE
Henry was no crook, Mr. Hawk. He was just
lonely.

Steven casually sniffs his drink before he takes a drink.

STEVEN
And you loved him?

JOYCE
With all my heart.

STEVEN
Nice to know you have one.

JOYCE
People judge other people before they
know the facts. I loved Henry very much.

STEVEN
Henry Miller is just an accident report
to me, but I can tell you something about
his type. A lonely man like him, with a
broad like you, doesn't stand a chance.
He starts doing things he wouldn't
normally do. Dangerous things, desperate
things. Anything to hold onto you. In the
end, he wouldn't hurt the thing he loved
most, but it is the thing he loved most
that got him killed.

Joyce shoots him a hurt look.

JOYCE
Henry knew I loved him. He didn't need to
buy me off. He was generous, but I never
asked for or expected things.

STEVEN

Susan was murdered because of Henry.

JOYCE

I never met her, and I'm sorry for your loss. But I never knew Henry to be anything other than a kind, gentle, straight arrow.

STEVEN

Maybe so, but he laundered a lot of money out of that bank, and lined his own pockets very nicely with other people's dough. And they're not too happy about it.

(sips drink)

Even though that bank is putting on a front that everything is okay, I get the distinct impression that several people are looking for that money.

JOYCE

Your suspicions are getting the best of you.

STEVEN

Suspicion is my business.

JOYCE

Clearly.

STEVEN

Why did you stop me from confronting Elonzo?

JOYCE

He would have killed you.

STEVEN

I can take care of myself.

JOYCE

You're not as tough as you think.

STEVEN

I'm not tough at all, just mad.

JOYCE

I'm sure there are better ways for you to deal with your anger. Much better ways.

Joyce moves in very close.

STEVEN

Maybe I should go back to my hotel and have a moment?

JOYCE

Not a chance. You owe me.

STEVEN

For?

JOYCE

I was your witness.

STEVEN

So that was you? Why did you do it?

JOYCE

You leave me breathless.

STEVEN

That's not hard to do, you're all breath anyway.

JOYCE

I'm much more than that, and you know it.

She kisses him deep - Long - Passionate.

INT. JOYCE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Joyce wakes up. She carefully gets out of bed and glances at the sleeping Steven. She picks up his wallet. Steven opens his eyes and watches Joyce as she looks through his wallet.

He then notices a portrait of Joyce on the wall. It is a little off - just something about it. Half the portrait is in the shadows. The other half is illuminated by the faint moonlight. This gives it a very eerie and sinister look.

EXT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT BLDG. - DAY

Steven leaves the apartment building. The same two henchmen get out of a Buick parked across the street. They go into the building.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Still in her bathrobe - Joyce drinks coffee and listens to the radio as she fixes her hair.

There is a knock at her door. She answers the door - startled by the two henchmen. They push her back and force their way inside.

JOYCE
Hey, mister!

One of the henchmen firmly grabs her by the arm.

HENCHMAN #1
Listen up, doll. Unless I ask you a question, the only thing I want to hear from you is air.

He shoves her onto the sofa.

HENCHMAN #1 (CONT'D)
Keep your ass planted.

The other henchman quickly searches the apartment.

HENCHMAN #2
We're clean.

HENCHMAN #1
(to Joyce)
You've been keeping the wrong company.

JOYCE
Then you should leave.

HENCHMAN #1
Where's the money?

JOYCE
What money?

He slaps her hard.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
Look, there is no money.

He slaps her hard again.

HENCHMAN #2
Mr. Miller owed a lot of money.

JOYCE
If I had any money I wouldn't be working at two clubs.

HENCHMAN #1
We'll just look around.

The two men start ransacking the apartment.

JOYCE
You don't have to bust up the place.

BEDROOM

Henchman #2 searches Joyce's bedroom. He intentionally knocks her portrait off the wall - damaging the frame. He chuckles.

LIVING ROOM

The man returns to the living room. Shakes his head.

HENCHMAN #1

The next time I pay you a visit your
brain's going to have air conditioning.

The men leave. Joyce is badly shaken.

EXT. PHONE COMPANY - DAY

Steven emerges. He slips a piece of paper into his wallet.

EXT. STEVEN'S CAR - DAY

Steven pulls to the curb just down from the bank and waits.

INT. STEVEN'S CAR - EVENING

Steven appears tired. Helen emerges from the bank. She wears a long coat and nice hat. She gets into a waiting taxi. He perks up and follows it.

EXT. MUSSO & FRANKS - EVENING

The taxi stops at Musso & Franks. Helen goes inside. Steven parks. Moments later a car pulls up. Elonzo gets out and heads into the restaurant. Steven gets out of his car.

INT. MUSSO & FRANKS - EVENING

Steven enters.

HOSTESS

Good evening, sir.

STEVEN

I'm just headed for the bar.

Steven goes to the bar and sits on the far end around the curve. The BARTENDER comes over.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Double Bourbon straight up.

Steven spots Elonzo and Helen sitting in a booth. They are having a hushed - but very intense - conversation. The bartender brings the drink over. Steven pays for it.

Elonzo orders food. Helen doesn't. After their waitress leaves they continue their intense conversation. Elonzo grabs Helen by her wrists, squeezing tight.

Helen jerks her arms away from Elonzo. She points her finger close to his face. She gets up and storms out of the restaurant.

Steven downs his drink. He gets up and scans the restaurant. He then heads for Elonzo's table.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

You don't mind if I sit down, do you?

Steven sits across the very surprised Elonzo.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Thought you had it all figured out with me tucked away in a cell and all.

ELONZO

You are either very brave or very dumb, Mr. Hawk.

STEVEN

My IQ is spelled in capital letters.

ELONZO

Smart men often do stupid things.

STEVEN

I don't remember anyone describing you as smart.

Elonzo shoots Steven a very intense look.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I didn't realize you knew Helen.

ELONZO

There's a lot you don't realize, Mr. Hawk.

STEVEN

I realize enough.

ELONZO

(chuckles)

I don't think you do.

STEVEN

No?

ELONZO

If you're so sure, perhaps you can enlighten me?

STEVEN

When the time is right.

The waitress brings Elonzo a drink. He picks it up. Steven boldly takes it from his grip and downs it himself. He slams the empty glass down on the table.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Thanks for the drink.

Steven gets up and walks away as Elonzo boils with anger.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Someone in the car is hidden in the shadows. They watch a house. They are barely noticeable by the red glow of a cigarette.

A car pulls up to the house. A lone man gets out and goes to the front door. Helen Caldwell emerges from the house. She is all dolled up. She wears a fur coat and the same nice hat. She leaves with the man.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Steven enters. Joyce flings herself at him.

JOYCE

After you left two men showed up. They slapped me around and tore my place up.

STEVEN

Who were they?

JOYCE

I don't know. They said if I don't have the money the next time they come back they'll kill me.

STEVEN

I'd believe them. They think you have the money.

JOYCE

I don't have any money.

STEVEN

Unfortunately they don't believe you. And you won't convince them otherwise.

JOYCE
What am I going to do?

STEVEN
(beat)
It'll be safer if you stay here.

INT. HELEN CALDWELL'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Helen returns home. She flips on her lights and is momentarily startled. She reacts to someone.

HELEN
What in the hell are you doing in my house?

EXT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - DAY

Steven leaves the hotel.

DET. CALHOUN(O.S.)
Mr. Hawk.

Steven glances over and sees Detective Calhoun standing outside his driver door - which is open.

STEVEN
Detective.

DET. CALHOUN
Get in.

Steven glances into the backseat. He then gets in.

EXT. FIRST BANK OF LOS ANGELES - DAY

Detective Calhoun parks in front of the bank. He and Steven get out and head inside.

INT. BANK - DAY

Detectives search for clues. Detective Parker comes over.

DET. PARKER
Helen Caldwell hasn't shown up for work in two days. No one has heard from her.

DET. CALHOUN
We need to know if there is something you're not telling us?

STEVEN

You know what I know. If I knew more, I would have this licked already and be back in New York. I don't want to be here any longer than I have to be. But this is personal. I owe it to my secretary to find out why her niece was murdered.

DET. PARKER

First Henry, then Susan, and now Helen.

STEVEN

Working at this bank has become a deadly occupation.

DET. CALHOUN

Auditors will uncover any wrongdoing on Helen's part, if any.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Steven enters. Joyce is waiting.

JOYCE

Where have you been?

STEVEN

Ran into those detectives. Turns out Helen Caldwell is missing.

JOYCE

Who?

STEVEN

She took over for Henry.

Steven hands her some money.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I want you to get us a different room under the name Claire McDonald.

JOYCE

What's going on?

STEVEN

Just do it, okay.

(beat)

Then I need you to do something for me. You're going to have to be convincing.

JOYCE

Why don't we just leave? We can get away from all this.

STEVEN

I can't leave. People are working real hard to either kill me or run me out of town. That means I'm getting close. Besides, this case is personal.

(beat)

Go on, get us that new room.

Joyce leaves. Steven pulls out the paper of phone numbers he got from the phone company. He picks up the phone.

INT. HENRY MILLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

It is a cold, drizzly night. Steven is inside Henry's house. He paces, a drink in hand. He checks the time. It's 11:40pm. He lights a cigarette and continues to pace.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

A car stops in the alley behind Henry's house. The headlights are cut. The engine is silenced. Detectives Calhoun and Parker get out of the car. They both look around.

DET. CALHOUN

What do you think?

DET. PARKER

I don't know what's going on?

(beat)

I'll go in. Cover my back.

Detective Parker climbs over the wall into the backyard. Detective Calhoun stays put. Adjusting his hat and buttons his coat in the cold drizzly air.

INT. HENRY MILLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Steven hears movement. He pulls his gun.

STEVEN

Let me see you or I start shooting.

Detective Parker appears in the dining room archway.

DET. PARKER

It's just me.

STEVEN

Where's your partner?

DET. PARKER

Watching the back.

Steven lowers his gun.

DET. PARKER (CONT'D)
You told us you shoot left-handed.

STEVEN
I lied.

DET. PARKER
What's going on?

STEVEN
Word got out I know where the money is.

DET. PARKER
Do you?

STEVEN
No.

DET. PARKER
That's a dangerous ploy.

STEVEN
This is a dangerous business.

DET. PARKER
How do you know anyone will show?

STEVEN
You did.

They hear the sound of a car - and see the flash of headlights out front. This is quickly followed by the sound and lights from a second car.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
You better make yourself scarce.

Detective Parker slips back through the archway into the darkened dining room. He is out of view.

EXT. HENRY MILLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Numerous mobster types gather in the driveway. Elonzo is present - as well as VINCENT MANETTI (30s) - a very serious looking man with stark sinister eyes that are unnerving. He is menacing to the core.

Two men station themselves out front. Two others make their way to the backyard. Elonzo, Vincent, and four other men enter the house.

INT. HENRY MILLER'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Elonzo enters with Vincent and the others. The four men take a quick look around. Vincent stays put next to Elonzo. Two of the men quickly pat Steven down and take his gun.

STEVEN

What's the matter, don't you guys trust me?

ELONZO

I trust no one.

Steven looks at Vincent - who just stares hard at him.

STEVEN

Who's the muscle?

ELONZO

This is Vincent. He's my personal guarantee.

STEVEN

For what?

ELONZO

That we get the proper information out of you. He can be very persuasive.

STEVEN

I believe you.

ELONZO

Enough of this idle chit chat.

(beat)

Where is the money, Mr. Hawk?

STEVEN

I have conditions.

ELONZO

I am afraid negotiating is out of the question.

STEVEN

I should have thought this plan out better then, because I don't know what Henry did with the money.

ELONZO

This situation is about to turn very bad for you, Mr. Hawk.

STEVEN

My client was Susan Johnson, and it's my job to figure why she was murdered.

ELONZO

Perhaps her murderer could answer that question?

STEVEN

(shakes head)
Not likely.

ELONZO

Why not?

STEVEN

Johnnie Whitmore killed Susan. And then Johnnie turned up dead as well.

ELONZO

Your conspiracy theories are amusing, Mr. Hawk, but I'm getting very bored with this subject, as are my colleagues.

STEVEN

Henry was in love with a woman well out of his league. To keep her happy and interested would have taken a good chunk of dough. Chances are he spent most of it and kept the rest close. Most likely, when he crashed into the river, the money went with him.

(beat)

But, if Henry was as smart as I think he was, any money left is likely buried in paperwork and well-hidden dummy accounts. Knowing where it is, but having access to it, are two different things.

VINCENT

No money?

STEVEN

Sorry, pal.

VINCENT

(menacing)
You said you had the money.

STEVEN

We all know truthfulness is a matter of opinion in this business.

VINCENT

That is unfortunate for you.

Vincent and two of the men immediately move toward Steven, who jumps back. There are two sudden shots and muzzle flashes from the darkened dining room.

Detective Parker stumbles into the room. His blood-soaked left hand pressed against his bloody abdomen. He briefly stumbles against the wall.

DET. PARKER

Hawk...

He collapses to the floor. He is dead. Steven makes a daring move for Detective Parker's gun. Vincent intercepts him. Steven is no match for the brute.

EXT. HENRY MILLER'S HOUSE/BACKYARD - NIGHT

Detective Calhoun climbs over the back wall. He rushes to the house. He is ambushed and knocked unconscious.

EXT. THE COCONUT GROVE - NIGHT

Joyce nervously paces outside. A car pulls to the curb. She quickly walks over and opens the passenger door.

JOYCE

What took you so long?

EXT. 1938 FORD PANEL VAN - NIGHT

The van slowly drives up an old, rugged, unpaved logging road. It's followed by a car.

INT. 1938 FORD PANEL VAN - NIGHT

A disheveled Steven rides in the rear of a van - being watched by Vincent and two others. The ride is a slow and bumpy one.

STEVEN

If I knew I was going on a trip, I would have packed a bag.

Vincent stares hard at Steven with his unnerving eyes.

VINCENT

It's not that type of trip, Mr. Hawk.

STEVEN

I was afraid of that.

VINCENT
You should of stayed in New York.

STEVEN
That's what people keep telling me.

INT. HENRY MILLER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Detective Calhoun stumbles into the house. He spots blood, lots of it, in the dining room. Everyone is gone.

DET. CALHOUN
What the hell is going on?

INT. 1938 FORD PANEL VAN - DAWN

The van stops. Two doors are heard opening and slamming. The back door opens. The same two henchmen are there.

HENCHMAN #1
Out.

Steven, Vincent, and the other men climb out.

EXT. VAN - DAWN

The sun is starting to peek over mountains to the east. Steven does a quick pan of the landscape. They are in the forest on the edge of the desert.

The terrain is thick trees, boulders, slopes, and ridges that lead down to a valley that transforms into the desert.

Elonzo and a mobster get out of the follow car.

ELONZO
Mr. Hawk... I am afraid this is where we part ways. You are of no use to us. And I am afraid you are simply in the way.

STEVEN
I've been known to be too noseey.

ELONZO
Nothing personal. Just good business.

STEVEN
I knew that would come back to haunt me.

ELONZO
I'm afraid sooner than you think.

Elonzo nods to Vincent. He holds his gun on Steven and motions. Steven, Vincent, and two henchmen start walking.

EXT. WOODS - DAWN

Steven walks in front. Vincent and the henchmen behind him. They have walked him into thick woods. They come to a small trail that leads down through trees and large boulders. Vincent jabs his pistol into Steven's back.

VINCENT

That way.

Steven starts walks down the small trail. It grows more steep. It becomes very rugged with more and more boulders entwined with the trees and foliage.

They carefully navigate the precarious trail. They pass the hat Helen Caldwell was wearing. It lays in shrubs.

STEVEN

Why do I get the strong impression you've been here before?

VINCENT

Keep moving.

STEVEN

Good spot... Nice and remote.
(long beat)
How far you taking me?

VINCENT

You'll know when you're dead.

The descending trail starts to curve. Steven stumbles badly. Vincent reaches out to grab him. Steven suddenly grabs a hold of Vincent and pulls him past him.

Vincent quickly loses his balance as he falls forward. He loses his gun. It discharges as he slams into the ground. Vincent hits his head, briefly loses consciousness.

Before the henchmen can react Steven jumps off the trail out onto a slope. He rolls about a hundred yards before he gets to his feet and runs into the thick woods.

The two henchmen fire repeatedly into the darkness. They rush over and help Vincent. They get him up onto his knees. He's dazed. His forehead is bleeding.

VINCENT (CONT'D)

Get him! Shoot him on sight.

The two henchmen pursue Steven as Vincent pulls out a handkerchief and wipes the blood from his forehead. He slowly stands and picks up his gun. He heads farther down the trail.

EXT. RUGGED TERRAIN - DAY

The sun has risen higher. Large slivers of sunlight begin to filter through the thick woods. Steven moves fast.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Steven can hear bullets striking all around him. He cuts through the thick trees and runs to his left - scampers through boulders.

He starts to descend from the mountains through very rugged rocks and boulders. Zig-zags his way through tight and gigantic boulders.

Down in the valley below he can see what appears to be a small road stop with a cafe and gas station. It appears to be about eight miles across the valley floor where the forest and desert begin to merge.

Bullets strike near him. A startled Steven looks back up the ridge. Vincent fires again. The bullet ricochets off a boulder. He jerks from a piece of rock hitting him in the cheek. His face slams into a large boulder.

He almost passes out. He leans his forehead against the boulder for support. His nose bleeds profusely. Blood flows on the boulder, rocks, and ground.

A sudden flurry of bullets strike all around him. He puts his arms up to protect his face as rocks and pieces of boulders ricochet everywhere.

He ducks down into a sitting position. Brings his knees to his face. He covers his face with his forearms as bullets strike and ricochet all around him.

Once the bullets stop he grabs a handkerchief from his pocket and presses it on his nose. Staying low he quickly maneuvers down the steep grade. Hides amongst the large boulders.

EXT. TOP OF RIDGE - DAY

Vincente looks for any sign of Steven. Can't see him. He motions to one of the henchmen to move down.

EXT. LARGE BOULDERS - DAY

The henchman comes upon the bloody scene.

HENCHMAN #2

(yells)

He's hit bad. Blood everywhere.

He looks down the steep ridge. Sees nothing in the descending maze of giant boulders. He starts climbing back upward.

EXT. ROADSIDE CAFE/GAS - DAY

The remote cafe and gas station sit in middle of the remote valley floor on the boundary of the desert. It is surrounded by mountains on three sides.

INT. CAFE/REST ROOM - DAY

A dirty and battered Steven washes up in the restroom.

EXT. ROADSIDE CAFE/GAS - DAY

The 1938 Ford Panel Van pulls up to the gas pumps. Vincent and the two henchmen get out. An elderly mechanic comes out of the service bay.

VINCENT

You seen anyone around here?

MECHANIC

You.

VINCENT

Fill it up. Check the oil and tires.

The mechanic starts pumping gas. Vincent motions to one of the henchmen - who starts investigating the exterior of the property. Vincent and the other henchman enter the cafe.

INT. CAFE - CONTINUOUS

The owner is behind the counter reading a newspaper. Vincent and one of the henchmen enter.

OWNER

Afternoon.

RESTROOM

Steven hears voices. He immediately stops washing up and turns off the faucet.

CAFE

OWNER

What can I get ya?

Vincent carefully eyes the joint.

VINCENT

Two Cokes.

The owner grabs two Cokes from the beverage refrigerator. Opens them. He hands them the Cokes. Notices Vincent's cut forehead. Vincent tosses ten cents on the counter.

OWNER

Looks like you took a bad one.

Vincent looks at him. The owner motions to Vincent's forehead. Vincent glares at him angrily.

VINCENT

What's it to ya?

OWNER

Nothing. Gee, mister, just making conversation. Don't get too many people on the weekdays.

VINCENT

Speaking of people. You haven't had any customers lately have you?

OWNER

A few today.

VINCENT

Anyone in particular?

OWNER

Mister?

HENCHMAN #1

We're looking for someone. Wondering if he passed through here, seeing as this is the only establishment for thirty miles.

OWNER

I had a forestry ranger early this morning. And a truck driver stopped in about two hours ago.

VINCENT

Alone?

OWNER

Yes, sir.

VINCENT

Nobody else?

OWNER

Just you.

Vincent points to a plate with a few specks of food remaining and two empty Coke bottles near the end of the counter.

VINCENT
Who does that belong to?

OWNER
The truck driver.

HENCHMAN #1
You don't clean up?

OWNER
I got all day to clean up.

The owner notices the second henchman outside. Vincent slides his sport coat open - shows his gun in his waistband.

VINCENT
So you wouldn't mind if we looked around?

OWNER
(nervous)
No, sir.

Vincent motions to the henchman. He goes into the kitchen while Vincent checks out the dining room area.

KITCHEN

The henchman searches every inch of the kitchen.

RESTROOM

The door bursts open. Vincent enters, gun drawn. Empty.

CAFE

Vincent and the henchman drink their cokes.

VINCENT
Whip us up three specials, one of those
to go.

The owner goes into the kitchen and starts making burgers.

EXT. ROADSIDE CAFE/GAS - DAY

The second henchman searches the service bay. He then goes around the far side of the building. There is a junk pile. It has old car shells, cafe equipment, metal, etc.

He looks at the junk and starts to head back to the front when he hears movement. He pulls his gun, approaches with caution. He hears the noise again, tenses up, aims his gun.

No noise. He creeps closer. A dog suddenly bolts out from his hiding place startling him.

INT. CAFE - DAY

Vincent and the other henchman have all but finished their burgers and fries. The third order is in a bag on the table.

HENCHMAN #1

That's one good burger, mister.

The owner does not respond. The henchman takes offense.

HENCHMAN #1 (CONT'D)

I said...

Vincent stares hard at the owner.

VINCENT

He heard you.

(to owner)

Maybe he doesn't want a tip?

They hear the sound of a motorcycle. They look outside and see a California Highway Patrol Officer at the gas pumps. The mechanic starts filling the tank. The officer heads inside.

The officer enters. Passes Vincent and the henchman. He approaches the counter.

OFFICER

Good afternoon.

The officer pulls money out. The owner glances at Vincent nervously.

ANGLE ON

Vincent, as he pulls his gun and sets it on his lap.

ANGLE ON

The CHP officer as he hands the owner a dollar.

OFFICER (CONT'D)

Gas.

He hands the owner a nickel.

OFFICER (CONT'D)
I'll take a soda.

The owner pulls a bottle of Coke, opens it, and hands it to the officer.

OWNER
Have a good day.

OFFICER
Thanks, buddy.

The officer turns and leaves. Barely looks at Vincent or the henchman. As the owner watches, the officer gets back on his motorcycle and rides away.

Moments later the second henchman comes in. He looks at Vincent and shakes his head. He pulls out three dollars. He hands it to the owner.

HENCHMAN #2
That's for the gas.

He pulls out a nickel and tosses it on the counter.

HENCHMAN #2 (CONT'D)
I'll take a drink.

The owner grabs a Coke, opens it, and gives it to him. Vincent and the other henchman join him.

HENCHMAN #2 (CONT'D)
Anything?

Vincent looks real hard at the owner.

VINCENT
No. What we got here is just an honest
hardworking businessman trying to get by.

Vincent stares at the owner for several intense seconds.

VINCENT (CONT'D)
Isn't that right?

OWNER
Yes, sir.

VINCENT
Let's go.

Vincent stuffs a dollar bill in the owners shirt pocket. He and the henchmen go out the door. The owner doesn't move. He watches as they get back into the panel van and drive off.

He then walks to the door and sees the van accelerating down the dirt road - kicking up the unmistakable dust trail. He lets out a sigh of relief.

He moves back behind the counter. Where he was standing is a two foot curtain about waist high. He slides the curtain open. Steven is crunched underneath the counter in a small hiding spot. The owner helps him out.

OWNER

Those boys are serious. But they would have lost their knees.

He pulls out a double barrel shotgun from under the counter.

OWNER (CONT'D)

How you gettin' back to the city?

EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY

Steven rides in the bed of a flatbed truck which is filled with junk metal and watermelons.

INT. HOTEL/NEW ROOM - DAY

Steven enters. Joyce appears shocked at Steven's appearance. She rushes to him. Hugs him tight.

JOYCE

What happened to you?

STEVEN

Got myself in a jam.

He starts taking his clothes off.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

We gotta move quick. Lay me out some fresh clothes while I take shower.

EXT. THE SUNSET CLUB - DAY

The panel van pulls up. Vincent and the henchmen get out. They go inside the club.

INT. HOTEL/NEW ROOM - DAY

A showered Steven finishes dressing in new clothes.

STEVEN

We're going to have to change hotels. Elonzo thinks I'm out of the picture, but you're one hot ticket.

There is a knock at the door. Steven looks at Joyce. She shakes her head. More knocking. Steven motions to Joyce, then pulls his Derringer from an end-table drawer.

JOYCE

Who is it?

MAN (O.S.)

Concierge.

As Steven slowly approaches the door from the side. Bullets suddenly blast through the window behind him. Steven leaps back and tackles Joyce. Bullets blast through the door. Steven pushes Joyce into the closet.

STEVEN

Stay there.

Steven rolls back across the floor. He hears someone run away. He stays low, cautiously opens the door, and peers out into the hallway. Guests look out their doors.

Joyce darts out of the closet. She runs over to Steven. Bullets blast through the window and the wall as she quickly darts by.

JOYCE

I'm not staying in here.

STEVEN

Great, come on. Stay behind me.

HALLWAY

They move down the hallway slow and cautious. They stick against the wall. Steven looks closely at every door. The elevator dings. The door opens. It's the hotel manager and desk clerk. Steven waves them back with the Derringer.

STEVEN

Get outta here!

They step back into the elevator. The door shuts. Steven and Joyce come to stairs.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Stay behind me.

STAIRS

They start down the stairs with caution. They see a man a floor below them. He fires and takes off down the stairs. Steven pursues the shooter. Joyce is a few steps behind him.

EXT. ROOSEVELT HOTEL - DAY

Steven and Joyce run out of the hotel. Steven has a hold of her hand. The sidewalk is full of people going about their daily business. The shooter is gone.

STEVEN
Do you see him?

JOYCE
No.

Steven lets go of Joyce's hand for only for a few seconds to look for him. When he turns around Joyce is gone.

STEVEN
Joyce?

He frantically looks around for her. There is no sign of her. The manager and desk clerk rush toward him.

MANAGER
Mr. Hawk!

Steven continues to look around for Joyce. No sign of her.

STEVEN
Have you seen Ms. Dorrington?

MANAGER
No.

The desk clerk shakes his head.

STEVEN
(to manager)
Please see if she went back inside.

The manager goes back inside.

DESK CLERK
What's going on, Mr. Hawk?

STEVEN
I don't know.

INT. BROWN DERBY - DAY

Steven sits at a booth. A hat plops on the table. Detective Calhoun sits across from him.

DET. CALHOUN
What happened at that meeting? Someone
bashed me and my partner is missing.

STEVEN

Shot dead. I'm a New York private dick, no one's going to look for me, but killing a cop will get you the death penalty. They cleaned their mess.

(sigh)

Unfortunately I witnessed the murder.

(beat)

That wasn't the best plan I ever came up with.

DET. CALHOUN

Don't play me, Hawk.

(threatening)

I'll take you down right here.

STEVEN

That's the way it went down.

DET. CALHOUN

What happened after the house?

STEVEN

They took me on a sightseeing trip I didn't like very much. They planned to leave me for the buzzards, and almost succeeded. But I managed to escape and got a ride back to the city.

DET. CALHOUN

That's a pretty loose story.

Steven reaches into his pocket and tosses a matchbook from the remote desert cafe onto the table.

STEVEN

You can verify it.

DET. CALHOUN

Keep your pants on. I need answers quick...

(points at Steven)

And they start with you.

STEVEN

Made it back to the hotel. They tried to kill us.

DET. CALHOUN

Us?

STEVEN

Joyce and me. Only problem is now Joyce is missing.

DET. CALHOUN
Maybe you're slippin'?

STEVEN
Not quite.
(beat)
We need to take a ride.

DET. CALHOUN
Where?

STEVEN
To her place.

DET. CALHOUN
Why?

STEVEN
Its the least safest place to go, meaning
its the smartest place to go.

Detective Calhoun looks hard at him.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
I'm being square with you. I'll prove it.

Steven pulls out the manila envelope he took from Henry's. He hands it to Detective Calhoun.

DET. CALHOUN
What's this?

He opens it, looks at it, and realizes it's Henry Miller's personal record of his laundering scheme.

DET. CALHOUN (CONT'D)
How long have you had this?

STEVEN
Long enough.

DET. CALHOUN
I don't get you, Hawk. Why are you giving
this to me now?

STEVEN
I had to make sure you were on the level.
If I gave that up sooner, I'd be dead.

Detective Calhoun thoroughly looks over the papers.

DET. CALHOUN
(beat)
Alright, Hawk, let's take that ride.

INT. CALHOUN'S CAR - DAY

Detective Calhoun pulls up to Joyce's apartment building. Steven shows him the Derringer.

STEVEN

I could use a piece.

Detective Calhoun reaches over and unlocks his glove compartment. He hands Steven a gun and puts the Derringer in its place.

INT. JOYCE'S APARTMENT - DAY

The door is already slightly ajar. Detective Calhoun pushes it all the way open. He and Steven enter the ransacked apartment.

It's obvious that Joyce cleared out in a hurry. Only personal items appear to be gone, her clothes, jewelry, and portrait.

DET. CALHOUN

She sure split out of here in a hurry.
Something has her spooked.

Steven finds a publicity photo of Joyce laying in the mess. He looks at it. Shakes his head.

STEVEN

I got a hunch.
(beat)
But you're going to think it is pretty
far-fetched.

DET. CALHOUN

At this point, I'll try anything.

STEVEN

I traced some of her phone calls. Seven
to Eureka and three to Union Station. She
might be on a train heading north.

INT. UNION STATION - DAY

Detective Calhoun and Steven approach the ticket counter. Detective Calhoun shows his badge.

DET. CALHOUN

We're looking for a hot dame. A real
looker. Could be on a train heading
north, possibly to Eureka.

Steven shows the ticket agent Joyce's publicity photo.

TICKET AGENT

(nods)

She's on the 643 northbound. Left at
3:30.

They look at the clock. It reads 4:37pm.

TICKET AGENT (CONT'D)

It has a few mail stops, then a thirty
minute layover in Santa Barbara. If you
hurry, you might be able to catch it.

INT. CALHOUN'S CAR - DAY

Detective Calhoun and Steve head north on Pacific Coast
Highway.

DET. CALHOUN

Why Eureka?

STEVEN

She's scared, and should be. They want
her dead. She grew up there.

INT. CALHOUN'S CAR - NIGHT

They pass the SANTA BARBARA CITY LIMITS sign.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Detective Calhoun pulls into the parking lot. He and Steven
quickly get out and head into the station.

INT. SANTA BARBARA TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Detective Calhoun and Steven approach the ticket booth.

STEVEN

We're looking for the 643 from Los
Angeles.

TICKET AGENT

Just missed her. She just pulled out.

Steven runs out to the tracks.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA TRAIN STATION - CONTINUOUS

Steven looks to his left. He sees the trailing lights of the
train almost a hundred yards away. He takes off running down
the tracks.

Detective Calhoun rushes out. He sees the train - and Steven
running up the tracks after it.

DET. CALHOUN

Hawk!

Steven keeps running. Detective Calhoun rushes back inside the station.

INT. SANTA BARBARA TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Detective Calhoun rushes up to the counter. He shows his badge.

DET. CALHOUN

I need to use your phone.

The ticket agent puts a phone in front of him. He picks up the receiver and dials 0.

DET. CALHOUN (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I need the Eureka, California police department.

EXT. RAILROAD TRACKS - NIGHT

Steven is within reach of the train's rear platform. He runs with all his might, reaches out, and grabs the handrail. He pulls himself up onto the platform.

He catches his breath. Checks his pistol. He then opens the rear access door and enters the train.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Steven makes his way through the storage car. He slides the door open and enters the next car forward. It is a supply car. He makes his way forward. A luggage car.

INT. CALHOUN'S CAR - NIGHT

Detective Calhoun pulls out of the train station. He turns south on highway 101 and speeds back toward Los Angeles.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Steven enters a passenger car. As he slowly makes his way forward he looks at every passenger. He reaches the next car forward. He slides the door open and enters.

He enters another passenger car. Same routine. No Joyce. He comes to the next door. He looks through the glass. It's the dining car. He slides the door open and enters.

Steven makes his way through the dining car. He spots a woman sitting alone. Her back is to him. Her hairstyle is unmistakable. It's Joyce.

Steven approaches her from behind. She drinks a glass of wine. He suddenly turns and sits facing her.

JOYCE
(startled)
Steven!

She sets the glass of wine down.

STEVEN
You seemed surprised.

JOYCE
How did...?

STEVEN
I find you? It's my job, and I'm good at it.

Joyce takes his hands. She smiles nervously at him.

STEVEN (CONT'D)
What's the matter, doll? You're shaking.

JOYCE
I'm just happy to see you.

STEVEN
Yeah... Just like a snake about to pounce on its prey.

JOYCE
Oh Steven, don't be upset.

STEVEN
Why not? You up and split town pretty damn fast. Not even a goodbye.

JOYCE
Oh, Steven, I'm sorry. I know I've behaved badly. I didn't want to leave you in a bad spot, but I was too scared to stay in Los Angeles.
(nervous beat)
Everything has become so complicated and dangerous.

STEVEN
Things tend to get that way when you involve yourself in bad things.

JOYCE

I just needed to get away. I would have...

STEVEN

Looked me up?

JOYCE

I would have. I just needed to get settled first. Oh Steven, don't hate me. I just didn't know what to do. They would have killed me.

STEVEN

You have to come back to Los Angeles with me. We're getting off this thing in San Francisco.

JOYCE

Oh Steven, I can't. You can't make me do that. I'm too afraid. They're going to kill me.

STEVEN

I'm afraid you don't have a choice, doll. If you run, the police will find you, or worse, Elonzo.

(stressing point)

You are a material witness in an embezzlement and murder scheme. You need to come back to Los Angeles until this thing is licked.

Joyce is very withdrawn.

JOYCE

I didn't mean to cause any trouble. If I had known what Henry was doing I would have broken it off.

STEVEN

You sure about that, doll?

He looks at her diamond earrings and ring.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

You wear those diamonds nicely.

A tear trickles down Joyce's face.

JOYCE

They are all I have to remember Henry by.

STEVEN
Quite the mementos.

JOYCE
I'm sorry you have such a callous view of me.

STEVEN
Human nature is what it is. Can't change it.

Joyce takes a big swig of wine.

JOYCE
So they tell me.

STEVEN
Where's your seat?

JOYCE
I have a compartment.

STEVEN
Let's go.

They get up and head to her sleeper car. Joyce stops at her compartment. She opens the door and enters.

JOYCE
It's not the Roosevelt, but its adequate enough for the ride to Eureka.

Steven enters behind her.

SLEEPER

Steven steps inside. The door shuts behind him. He looks over his shoulder. Detective Parker is there - aiming a gun.

DET. PARKER
Hello, Mr. Hawk.

Steven looks at Joyce and Detective Parker - realizing he's been had.

DET. PARKER (CONT'D)
You really annoy me, Hawk.

STEVEN
(gestures)
I never learn.

DET. PARKER
Get his piece.

Joyce reaches into Steven's waist and takes his gun. She hands it to Detective Parker and kisses him.

STEVEN

Better be careful, detective...
(looks at Joyce)
Those lips are poison.

DET. PARKER

Maybe to you.

STEVEN

It's all starting to make sense now. You two did Johnnie. Joyce wears very distinctive perfume, the same perfume that was on the scarf used to strangle Johnnie. I'm guessing she was used to distract Johnnie who thought he was getting lucky, until you snuck up behind him and strangled him.

DET. PARKER

Hearsay, Mr. Hawk. That will never make it inside a courtroom.

STEVEN

When I left Johnnie's, I couldn't get the door open. The latch was funky. But you opened it quick and easy... like you been there before.

Detective Parker looks at Steven. Gives a nervous chuckle.

DET. PARKER

Johnnie was a weasel. He was sent out by the Chicago mob to locate a bank to launder money through. He approached Henry Miller, who steadfastly refused.

(beat)

But he began to weaken after he started dating Joyce.

STEVEN

Who happens to have very expensive tastes.

DET. PARKER

Women with her looks often do...
(to Joyce)
And often get what they want.

Steven stares hard at Joyce.

STEVEN

No matter what the cost.

Joyce looks away.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

Come now, doll.

(sarcastic)

Don't tell me I hurt your feelings?

DET. PARKER

Once Henry realized how much money he would be making, he finally agreed to the deal.

(beat)

At first it went off without a hitch. But then he got greedy. He started skimming off the top. Apparently he thought nobody would find out.

STEVEN

(slight chuckle)

Mob accounts did.

DET. PARKER

It was discovered that two hundred thousand dollars of the mob's laundered money is missing.

STEVEN

That would make certain individuals take notice.

DET. PARKER

Helen Caldwell did, amongst others. She was the bank accountant. She accidentally discovered serious discrepancies with the bank's finances.

STEVEN

Bad luck.

DET. PARKER

Henry paid her off to keep her quiet, and the mob couldn't kill Henry because he was laundering their money.

(beat)

They sent Elonzo Alvarez out to lean hard on him, but then Henry was killed in the accident, Helen offered to locate the missing money for a cut.

STEVEN

How did Susan fit into all this? Why murder her? She was a good kid just doing her job.

DET. PARKER

(shakes head)

Tough break. Thinking Susan might know something, Helen sent Johnnie to lean on her, but he messed up and killed her. This brought too much attention to the case, not only with the LAPD, but also with you as well. Especially you.

STEVEN

So you killed him.

DET. PARKER

No choice.

STEVEN

And Helen?

DET. PARKER

Simply took her out of the equation.

STEVEN

Then you faked your death.

DET. PARKER

I simply navigated my way through the web of lies and deceit.

STEVEN

I guess your honesty depends on how many zeros there are?

DET. PARKER

To quote you, Mr. Hawk "It's a dangerous business."

Steven looks at Detective Parker and Joyce.

STEVEN

What I don't get is you two. I'm guessing she ran into your arms all weepy like. Figured a Joe like you would protect her?

DET. PARKER

To protect and serve, Mr. Hawk. To protect and serve.

STEVEN

Yeah... but to what end?

DET. PARKER
You should have gone back to New York.

STEVEN
I would have a longer life expectancy.

DET. PARKER
Sooner or later everyone's luck runs out.
(beat)
This time yours did.

Steven scratches his head.

STEVEN
Yeah, looks like it.

DET. PARKER
We're taking another walk.

Steven shoots Joyce a look.

STEVEN
Well... Guess this is it, doll.

Joyce looks at him - tears in her eyes.

JOYCE
Oh Steven... I never wanted this.

Detective Parker sticks the gun in Steven's back.

DET. PARKER
Start walkin' before I get all teary
eyed.

They step out of the sleeper.

TRAIN

Detective Parker walks directly behind Steven. He keeps his gun pressed firmly in Steven's back as they walk through the series of cars to the rear of the train. They come to the door that leads to the rear platform.

DET. PARKER
Open it.

Steven opens the door.

DET. PARKER (CONT'D)
Step out.

Steven attacks Detective Parker. The gun is knocked out of Detective Parker's hand. The two men fight violently.

Steven punches Detective Parker, knocking him to the floor. Steven goes for the gun. It isn't there. He looks up.

Joyce is aiming the gun at Steven. She shakes. Appears upset. Steven doesn't say anything. Takes an easy step toward her.

She fires once, hitting Steven in the shoulder. He is knocked to the floor by the shot. Joyce drops the gun. Steven struggles to his feet. He is clearly stunned.

Detective Parker is right there. He punches him in the face. He knocks Steven out onto the rear platform.

EXT. TRAIN/REAR PLATFORM - CONTINUOUS

Steven slams hard into the hand rail. Detective Parker kicks him in the chest - knocking Steven off the platform. Detective Parker goes back inside. He shuts the door.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Detective Parker picks up his gun. Slides it back into his shoulder holster.

DET. PARKER

Now we just need to get you to a safe place.

He embraces Joyce. Kisses her.

DET. PARKER (CONT'D)

Then we find the money.

EXT. TRAIN/REAR PLATFORM - NIGHT

Steven is hanging off the end of the train for dear life. His right-hand is barely clinging to the bottom of the hand rail.

His left-hand clings to the foot support. He is in obvious pain and sweats profusely.

He uses all of his strength to hold on. He struggles, but manages to pull himself up, severe pain clear on his contorted face. He has just enough strength to pull himself back onto the platform.

He slides back against the door. He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a handkerchief. He presses it against his wound. He stays put.

INT. THE SUNSET CLUB - NIGHT

Detective Calhoun enters. The club is packed. A big band is in full swing. Couples dance. He looks around.

He sees Elonzo sitting in a booth with heavy duty mobsters - one of them being Vincent. He heads for Elonzo's booth. He doesn't blink.

Detective Calhoun stands in front of Elonzo and the others. He shows his badge. The mobsters look at Elonzo - then at Detective Calhoun.

ELONZO

What can I do for you, detective?

Detective Calhoun leans forward. Looks right at Elonzo. He tosses the matchbook from the desert cafe onto the table.

DET. CALHOUN

You didn't do a very thorough job getting rid of Hawk.

Elonzo just stares at Detective Calhoun. He puts on a calm and cool demeanor.

ELONZO

I'm afraid I don't know what you're talking about, detective.

Elonzo casually picks up the matchbook. He looks closely at it for several moments. He tosses it back to Detective Calhoun.

ELONZO (CONT'D)

I have never heard of anyone by the name of Steven Hawk.

Detective Calhoun stares at Elonzo.

DET. CALHOUN

Who said his name was Steven?

Elonzo looks hard at Detective Calhoun. He lights a Cuban cigar. He plays it cool.

ELONZO

Why are you here detective?

(gestures)

You are intruding upon my place of business without just cause.

DET. CALHOUN
Thought it might interest you that Hawk
is still on the case.

ELONZO
(dismissive)
Again with the birdman.

DET. CALHOUN
Oh, and one other minor detail that might
interest you. Joyce Dorrington managed to
skip town.

Detective Calhoun walks away. The mobsters turn to Elonzo. He
is enraged.

EXT. UNION AIR TERMINAL AIRPORT - DAWN

Detective Calhoun boards a small plane. It taxis down a
runway and heads north.

INT. TRAIN/STORAGE CAR - MORNING

Steven sits on the floor. His back is against the rear
platform door. He uses his sport coat as a blanket.

EXT. ELONZO ALVEREZ HOUSE - MORNING

Elonzo and two of his men get into a car. The two men get in
the front. Elonzo gets in the back. The car pulls out of the
driveway. Accelerates down the residential street.

INT. ELONZO'S CAR - MORNING

The car stops at a light. Cars stop on both sides of Elonzo's
car. The two men in the front seat suddenly lay down.

Elonzo looks out his right window and sees a man looking at
him from the other car. He then looks out his left window and
sees another man looking at him from that car.

The two men in the other cars quickly produce Tommy Guns.
Before Elonzo can react - they open fire. Hundreds of bullets
blast into the back of the car - and into Elonzo. He slumps
forward in his seat, dead.

The two men in the front seat calmly get out. Each one gets
into a different car. The other two cars drive away. They
leave Elonzo's bullet-riddled body in the abandoned car.

EXT. EUREKA TRAIN STATION - DAY

It's a cold, dark, rainy day in Eureka as the train pulls
into the station.

EXT. TRAIN/REAR PLATFORM - DAY

Steven steps out onto the rear platform. He slowly puts on his sport coat - wincing from the pain of his shoulder.

EXT. EUREKA TRAIN STATION - DAY

Passengers begin to disembark. Luggage is being unloaded. Detective Parker and Joyce get off the train. They wait for the rest of their belongings.

EXT. TRAIN/REAR PLATFORM - DAY

Steven peers around the train. He spots Detective Parker and Joyce as they get the rest of their belongings. They head into the station.

EXT. EUREKA TRAIN STATION - DAY

Steven makes his way through the throng of people. He notices two men paying close attention to him. They are Eureka detectives AARON HOLLINGSWORTH (34) and DANIEL SHUTE (40). They say something to each other, then approach Steven.

DET. SHUTE

Steven Hawk?

STEVEN

Who wants to know?

Steven tenses up. The man takes his badge out.

DET. SHUTE

I'm Detective Daniel Shute, Eureka Police. And this is my partner, Detective Aaron Hollingsworth.

They notice the blood on Steven's sport coat.

DET. HOLLINGSWORTH

You okay?

STEVEN

I got shot by a dame, but I'll live.

DET. SHUTE

We got a phone call from a Detective Calhoun of the LAPD. Was the person you were looking for on that train?

STEVEN

Yeah, and so was Detective Calhoun's not so dead partner.

DET. HOLLINGSWORTH

We'll arrest them as they attempt to leave.

STEVEN

Too late. They're already off the train. But I have the phone number of where they're going.

Steven hands Detective Hollingsworth a piece of paper with a phone number written on it.

DET. SHUTE

Get us an address.

Detective Hollingsworth quickly walks away. Detective Shute looks at Steven's shoulder more closely.

DET. SHUTE (CONT'D)

We better get that shoulder looked at.

STEVEN

No time. I don't know if they're planning to stick around.

EXT. SECLUDED HOUSE - DAY

The weather remains dark, gloomy, wet, and windy. The rain has briefly stopped. A taxi pulls up the house. Joyce gets out and quickly makes her way inside. Detective Parker starts carrying in luggage and other belongings.

INT. SECLUDED HOUSE - DAY

The power is out. The house is dark but cozy. A fire burns in the fireplace. Detective Parker carries in the last of the belongings. He embraces Joyce. They kiss.

JOYCE

Want a drink.

DET. PARKER

Sure.

Joyce mixes two drinks. She hands one to Detective Parker. He takes a sip. He then takes special notice of the fire in the fire place. He appears uneasy. Puts down his drink.

JOYCE

What's wrong?

DET. PARKER

If we're the only two people here, then who made the fire?

HENRY (O.S.)
Hello, detective.

Detective Parker looks toward the darkened staircase. A figure comes into view. It's Henry Miller. He aims his gun at genuinely surprised Detective Parker.

DET. PARKER
What the hell is going on?

HENRY
I should have drowned that night, but I was ejected from my car and landed near the far bank. I swam and made my way out.

DET. PARKER
Whose body was recovered?

HENRY
A bum. After I made my way back, I gave him all the booze he wanted. Once he was plastered I dressed him in my clothes. I loaded my wallet with dough and slipped it inside the breast pocket. I cut off his hands and beat him in the face and head with a large rock, which was a necessary, but quite unpleasant, task. I then tossed him into the river a mile south of the wreck. The river took him quick. They found him two days later. Too much trauma to positively identify the body, so I was officially declared dead.

DET. PARKER
Nice and tidy.
(to Joyce)
You set me up.

JOYCE
Nothing personal. You were my only chance to get out of Los Angeles.

DET. PARKER
Hawk was right, you're pure poison.

JOYCE
I couldn't stay with Steven because too many people were trying to kill him. They almost killed us in our room.

DET. PARKER
So you played me.

HENRY

Thank you, detective, for seeing Joyce safely here. But your services are no longer required.

DET. PARKER

Look, pal...

(stresses point)

I'm not leaving here without the money.

HENRY

You had the money all along.

Detective Parker and Joyce both appear genuinely surprised.

HENRY (CONT'D)

(to Joyce)

Get the portrait.

Joyce walks over to the portrait. She unwraps it.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Slice the back. Scissors are on the desk.

Joyce gets the scissors. She slices open the paper backing of the portrait. Bundles of money tumble out. They gaze at the money. It reflects eerily in the glow of the fire. Joyce reaches in and pulls the rest of the money out.

Detective Parker pulls his gun. He quickly brings it up to shoot Henry. But Henry beats him to the trigger. He shoots Detective Parker twice in the chest.

Detective Parker fires his gun aimlessly. He then tumbles to the floor, dead. His gun still gripped firmly in his hand.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You shouldn't have brought him.

JOYCE

I had no choice. I needed him to get out of Los Angeles.

HENRY

What about that private dick?

JOYCE

(somber)

Dead.

HENRY

Good.

Joyce checks Detective Parker's pulse.

JOYCE
As is the detective.

HENRY
Then we're in the clear.

JOYCE
Not yet.

Joyce puts her finger against Detective Parker's trigger finger. She lifts his forearm and aims the gun at Henry.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
You're still alive.

Joyce presses her finger against Detective Parker's. The gun fires. Henry is hit in the upper chest. He drops his gun and stands motionless for a few moments.

He gazes into Joyce's cold heartless eyes. He takes a few steps down the stairs, collapses, then stumbles down the staircase. He is dead.

Joyce rushes up to Henry's body. She checks his pulse. She quickly moves back over to the money.

STEVEN (O.S.)
Hello, doll.

Startled - Joyce looks to her right. Steven is standing just inside the living room. Aims a gun at her. She immediately starts to work it - but is clearly stunned to see Steven.

JOYCE
You're...

STEVEN
What? Alive?

JOYCE
Thank God!

She rushes over to him.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
I thought he killed you.

She is teary-eyed. Working it.

JOYCE (CONT'D)
They got into a violent argument over the money and me, then shot each other. I couldn't stop them.

STEVEN

That's funny, doll. I only heard one shot. Just like the one you fired at me.

JOYCE

Oh Steven, I didn't want to hurt you. I didn't. But Detective Parker forced me to shoot you. He said if I didn't get the money he would kill me.

STEVEN

He didn't put the gun in your hand.
(terse)
He didn't force you to pull the trigger.

JOYCE

I was confused and upset.

STEVEN

As opposed to now?

He grabs her by the arms.

STEVEN (CONT'D)

I would believe you, doll, if it wasn't for the fact that you knew EXACTLY what you were doing.

Joyce appears desperate.

JOYCE

No, Steven. I love you.

STEVEN

You certainly have a helluva way of showing it.

She moves over to the money. She holds up bundles to Steven.

JOYCE

We have the money. They think it's gone. We can go away together.

STEVEN

And what?... Live happily ever after?

JOYCE

Yes, Steven, together. You and me, wherever we want.

STEVEN

The thing is, doll, you're as deadly as you are gorgeous. Everyone involved with you becomes a stiff.

JOYCE
Oh, Steven...

STEVEN
Save it for the judge.

Steven picks up her portrait and tosses it into the fire.

He takes the distraught Joyce by the arm. He leads her out the front door.

EXT. SECLUDED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Steven escorts Joyce out of the house to Detective Shute and Detective Hollingsworth. Another police car pulls up. An officer and Detective Calhoun get out.

STEVEN
(to Det. Shute)
You have two homicides inside...
and a lot of embezzled dough.

He hands Joyce over to Detective Hollingsworth. He handcuffs her. Joyce looks at Steven. Her eyes swell up with tears.

JOYCE
Can't you love me?

Steven gently cups his open palm along her right cheek. He looks deep into her eyes.

STEVEN
(beat)
Goodbye, doll.

Detective Hollingsworth walks her to the police car. Detective Calhoun approaches.

DET. CALHOUN
You okay, Hawk?

Steven nods and looks back at the house.

STEVEN
Your ex-partner's in there, and he's not breathing.

Detective Calhoun glances at the house.

DET. CALHOUN
Well... truth be told, I never really liked him that much.
(beat)
What are you going to do now?

Steven looks up at the dark stormy clouds.

STEVEN

(sighs)

I gotta get back to New York, it's safer.

ANGLE ON

Detective Hollingsworth and Joyce as he puts Joyce in the backseat of the police car. She looks longingly and sincerely at Steven. Tears trickle down her cheeks.

INT. SECLUDED HOUSE - DAY

Joyce's portrait burns in the fireplace. Her image is slowly engulfed by the flames.

FADE OUT.

ROLL CREDITS.

THE END