

BECKLEY

Written by

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Family, they can be the death of you.

I spent every summer as a kid in Beckley, WV. Write what you know.

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FADE IN:

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT

ESTABLISHMENT MONTAGE: from Potomac River to Kennedy Center to Washington Monument to Lincoln Monument, etc. Ends on D.C. Police Headquarters building, then *Fallen Officers* monument.

INT. APARTMENT IN GEORGETOWN, D.C. - MOMENTS LATER

Garden-apartment living room with couch and chairs. A wall shelf holds multiple *D.C. Metropolitan Police Department* awards with *Certificates of Commendation* hanging over them.

End-table telephone *rings*. Curtains on balcony part.

ERECKA BRAUN, African-American female, late 40s, in a track suit, enters through curtains holding a half-full wine-glass and answers phone. Other voice not heard.

ERECKA

Erecka Braun.
(sips, spit-takes)
Who?! ...Really? ...No, it's just,
(wipes chin)
been so long. How'd you find ...?
(sips, gags surprised)
What, do what --why me?!

Erecka yanks receiver away from her ear, then holds it back.

ERECKA

Alright, alright. I'll call
tomorrow --

She yanks receiver away from her ear again, then holds back.

ERECKA

Okay, got it ...I got it! I'll fly
in tomorrow ...Problem? Yeah, big
f'n problem ...No, forget about it.
(hangs up, stares at phone)
I sure did.
(chugs wine)
Damn.

She exits out through balcony-curtains shaking her head.

EXT. RALEIGH COUNTY MEMORIAL AIRPORT, W.V. - NEXT DAY

A turbo-prop lands near Beckley, West Virginia and stops.

STEWARDESS opens and locks-back passenger door, then drops its attached-stairs. She has a strong West Virginia accent.

Erecka, wearing a business skirt-suit, is the first to exit.

STEWARDESS

Thankee for flyin' Beckley Air.

ERECKA

"Thankee" for landing. Thought for a moment we'd parachute in.

Stewardess flustered. Erecka descends. FEW PASSENGERS exit behind her. ALL enter its small terminal.

EXT. BECKLEY AIRPORT TERMINAL - LATER SAME DAY

Erecka sits on her two suitcases outside terminal's main door holding a soda can. She checks her wristwatch miffed, then sees the airport's entrance sign and squints at it. It's slogan reads, "Fly Beckley First."

ERECKA

Who's on "first?" What's on second?

Erecka finishes her drink, crushes its can in the middle, then basketball-shoots it into a trashcan and scores.

ERECKA

I don't give a fuck's on third.

A plane *takes off*. She reaches up for it as if to climb in.

An old beat-up Cab pulls-up. Its trunk auto-pops open.

Erecka throws suitcases in trunk and enters back seat.

INT. CAB OUTSIDE RALEIGH TERMINAL - CONTINUOUS

Cab's seats are worn and torn. Its headliner sags.

Erecka tries to get comfortable, but can't. A spring pokes her in the butt. She feels herself being watched and looks up in its rear view mirror.

Black weathered eyes squint back belonging to CABBIE, African-American female, 60s, missing a front tooth. Her facial skin is cracked by hard living. She always chimney-smokes a cheap stogie and has a bird-whistle West Virginia accent.

ERECKA

Ritz-Carlton, please, and --
 (waves hand to move smoke)
 could you stop smoking?

CABBIE

Maybe, maybe not, don't know, never
 tried. Why start now, dearie?

Cabbie pulls down her old flag-style meter and drives away fast throwing Erecka back into her seat. A new spring pokes. Erecka tries to click her seatbelt together. It doesn't work.

CABBIE

Name?

ERECKA

(drops head)
Idiota.

CABBIE

You eye-talian?!

EXT. BECKLEY RITZ-CARLTON MOTEL - LATER SAME DAY

A single-floor long building with no windows is hidden in the back, way back, in a mini-mini shopping center.

Cab drives through a lane signed "Exit Only" of a *Freezie Freeze* and stops behind it at the motel.

Rear door opens. Smoke pours out. Erecka exits *coughing*. She stare up at the motel's cheap neon sign flashing, "Ritz Carlton of Beckley."

ERECKA

Wait, here? This ain't a --?

Driver's window rolls down. Cabbie's hand extends through its smoke and *snaps* fingers. Erecka slaps a \$20 bill in its palm.

ERECKA

Meter read fifteen.

Cabbie presses a button and the cab's trunk auto-*pops* open.

Erecka grabs her two suitcases and pulls them out.

Cab drives away fast causing its trunk to *slam* shut.

ERECKA

Need a receipt!

Cab quick-stops at the *Freezie Freeze* drive-thru window.

MILLY, Caucasian late-teens, buxomly, bouffant hairdo, slides open its Serving Window. Her cleavage leans out first showing a white apron with strategic chocolate stains. West Virginia accent never had it so good.

MILLY

Evening sugar, pleasant surprise.
"Big o' Split" --extra nutty?

Cabbie's hands over Erecka's \$20 bill. Milly stuffs it somewhere in her *Piedmont Hills* and disappears inside.

Erecka enters motel with luggage sarcastic imitating Milly.

ERECKA

Big o' surprise. All's "extra
nutty" here.

Erecka turns an ankle and breaks a heel. She recovers, then limps on fighting with her luggage.

ERECKA

Welcome to bum fuck. What the fuck,
is this bum doing here?

INT. BECKLEY RITZ-CARLTON MOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Long hallway with rooms only off one side. Its check-in counter has a call bell. No one is present.

Erecka enters and *dings* bell. No response. She *dings* again.

GRANNY, 70s, African-American female, in a a shawl, shuffles out the back through a curtain carrying an antique *Buck* knife in one hand and a Styrofoam cup in the other.

Erecka snorts, then sings "The Beverly Hillbillies" TV-theme.

ERECKA

"Come and listen to my story about
a man named Jed, poor mountaineer
barely kept his family fed."

Granny actually does sound like the TV show's one.

GRANNY

Easy sonny-girl, can stills hear.

ERECKA

What's that for?

Granny spits black chewing tobacco juice in her cup.

GRANNY
Fer juicin', nummy.

Erecka shakes her head pointing at Granny's knife.

Granny pulls a piece of white pine out of her apron and shaves an edge off it in one clean stroke with her blade.

ERECKA
So folks literally, whittle their
lives away up here.

GRANNY
You a dumb-ass detective, or a
smart-ass comedienne?

ERECKA
Bit of both I reckon. Checking in.
Braun, Erecka. Non-smoking, please.

Granny raises her nose to sniff the air like a wolf.

GRANNY
Fibber.

ERECKA
Excuse me?
(smells own clothes)
Oh, that crazy cab driver smokes
like a chimney.

GRANNY
Older gal, missin' teeth?

ERECKA
Missin' manners.

GRANNY
Baby sis.

They stare. Erecka turns to exit with her luggage.

GRANNY
Where you limpin' to?

ERECKA
Back to civilization.

GRANNY
(spits in cup)
Then act civil. You're here now.
Take your shoes off, sit a' spell.

Erecka is too tired to argue and drops her two suitcases to lean an elbow on the counter.

ERECKA

Do I call you --Granny?

Granny threatens Erecka with her knife giving the stink-eye.

GRANNY

Only if we's kin.

ERECKA

Never know, I am from here.

GRANNY

No? Where'd you schoolin'?

ERECKA

Beckley Elementary.

GRANNY

Well Lord have mercy, we is kin!
(snicker-laugh)
Well, half. Most folk here are.

ERECKA

Which half?

GRANNY

Good part. Who you visitin'?

ERECKA

My half-sister. Well, half-truth.

GRANNY

Lord have mercy twice, Nellie Mae!

Granny *spits* in her cup, then wipes chin and shakes head.

GRANNY

Shame wha' happen.

ERECKA

"Wha' happen?"

GRANNY

Showin' up so sudden-like, figured
you knowed.

ERECKA

"Knowed" what?

GRANNY

None a' my bees-wax.

ERECKA

Thought we were close?

GRANNY

Not that close.

Granny slides a vintage metal room-key across the counter.

GRANNY

After ten, knock real loud. Might
take awhile 'fore a body answers.

ERECKA

Do I telegraph for a rental car?

Granny slides a taxi-cab business card across the counter.

GRANNY

Guests git a discount.

ERECKA

(smells card, *coughs*)
But not a receipt.

Granny bites off a big chaw, chews, then spits black juice through the gap in her front teeth into her cup on the counter. She scores and smiles big. All her teeth are black.

EXT. BISCUITS N' BEANS RESTAURANT - THAT NIGHT

Detached red-plank barn-like building. Front parking lot is full with older cars and pick-up trucks.

Erecka parks a rental car and exits wearing earlier suit.

ERECKA

Must be a town meeting.

She drops her car keys, bends, and kicks them away.

ERECKA

The magical thing about going back
home is --it feels so magical, when
you get back to your "real" home.

An old truck starts somewhere and *backfires*.

Erecka ducks behind her car reaching inside her jacket for a gun. Nothing is there.

Same truck drives away blowing blue smoke out its tailpipe.

Erecka stands and steps towards her keys only to kick them under another car. She looks straight up at the night sky.

ERECKA
 Having fun yet?
 (bends to get keys)
 'Cause I'm not.

INT. BISCUITS N' BEANS FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Its plank-flooring has square tables with red-and-white checkered tablecloths lit by lantern-style candles.

DINERS, Caucasian country families, eat with zest and no talking. MOMS and DADS smoke cigarettes. SONS smoke yellow corn-silk pipes. DAUGHTERS pretend-smoke pink-colored corn-silk pipes. It is a true Redneck convention.

Erecka enters. Time stands still with Diners mouths open full of food staring at her, then ALL go back to slopping.

ERECKA
 I'm in god damn "Deliverance."

TILLY, Milly's twin, also buxomly, spills out the sides of her red and white Bib Apron. She sashays to Erecka.

TILLY
 Evenin' sugar, big o' surprise.

ERECKA
 (double-take)
 You work at Freezie-Freeze, too?

TILLY
 That's my twin Milly, silly! I'm Tilly. Must be stayin' at the Ritz.

Erecka coughs waving her hand to clear the smoky corn-air.

ERECKA
 Sure ain't no "Ritz." Where's non-smoking --out back?

TILLY
 Ain't got no Aussie place here.

ERECKA
 Ever heard of second-hand?

TILLY
 We got one a-those. But they close at six. Party a' one?

ERECKA

This ain't no party.
(holds up two fingers)
I'm meeting my half-sister.

The top-button on Tilly's blouse pops-open as she exclaims.

TILLY

Must be Mae's alien sister!

ERECKA

You mean --alienated?

TILLY

Bein' from our Nation's Capitol --
I's right the first time. Walk this
way.

Erecka touches Tilly's elbow to stop her.

ERECKA

How'd you know where I'm from?

TILLY

We're on a mountaintop two hours
from the nearest town. Everyone
knows everything about everybody up
here, silly.

Tilly sashays exaggerated past tables. Dads watch her hips.

Erecka watches Dads watching Tilly, smiles, and over-sashays.

Dads watch her. Moms get jealous. Fights break out at tables.

INT. BISCUITS N' BEANS BACK ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Smaller dining room holds five tables with only one MARRIED
COUPLE, African-American, older, sitting at a corner-table.

Tilly, followed by Erecka, enter through a partition door.

Erecka coughs again fanning the air, then squints at someone.

NELLIE MAE BRAUN, African-American, early 50s, in jeans and t-
shirt, drinks alone at a table. Erecka sits across from her.

TILLY

Drink, sugar?

ERECKA

Beer, draft.

Mae *shakes* the ice in her empty glass. Tilly nods and exits.

ERECKA

Been a long time, Nellie Mae.

MAE

Just Mae. Nellie's been long gone.

ERECKA

Where'd she go?

MAE

Can't say, left real sudden-like.

WAITRESS, African-American teen, enters with a serving-tray. She puts a frosty mug of beer in front of Erecka and replaces Mae's glass with a full one taking the old one.

WAITRESS

Y'all ready to order?

ERECKA

Moment, please.

Waitress nods and goes to Married Couple.

ERECKA

Nellie was welcome to visit me.

There is no angrier female anywhere on Earth, regardless of color, than an angry drunk redneck. Mae chokes on her drink.

MAE

"Welcome?!" Hell, I ain't never heard a peep from your sorry black ass in some forty year.

ERECKA

Time gets away from us all. But I'm here now, so there's still time.

Mae chugs half her new drink, then *slams* glass on table spilling some.

Married Couple and Waitress look over.

MAE

"Time?!" All we gots up here is time. Time to waste, time to get in trouble, but never enough time to --

Mae chugs the rest of her drink and holds up now empty glass to Waitress *jiggling* its ice. Waitress nods and exits.

ERECKA

"Never enough time toooo" --?

MAE

Fogetaboutit.

Mae *cracks* an ice-cube between her teeth.

ERECKA

What's really bothering you, Mae?

MAE

(*drunk-snort*)

You're the god damn dee-teck-tive!

ERECKA

I don't know you, and you don't know me. So I can't know what this is all about, unless you tell me.

MAE

You a damn poet that don't know it?

Erecka scoots her chair closer to put a hand over Mae's.

ERECKA

Why did you call me after all these years?

Mae's stoic countenance cracks, she's in extreme pain.

MAE

Make it stop.

Waitress returns and replaces Mae's drink taking old one.

WAITRESS

Need more time?

MAE

(wails)

"T-i-m-e?!"

ERECKA

Just the check, please.

Waitress is flustered. Married Couple watch. Mae finger-circles *One More* to Waitress who nods and exits.

ERECKA

I can't stop whatever it is, if I don't know what it is.

MAE

"It" --is all shit.

ERECKA

Let's go back to your place for some privacy.

MAE

Not there, too many bad memories.

Mae grabs her new drink and downs it in one gulp.

ERECKA

Drinking like that won't stop them.
That, I do know.

MAE

Yeah, right. What kind a' bad 'membrances you got?

Erecka takes a big swig of her beer leaving her with a foam mustache. Mae reaches over and dabs it off with her napkin.

ERECKA

Had to shoot a suspect. An old man. He had Cancer, terminal. Wanted to die on his own terms, so his gun's chamber was empty.
(gulps down her beer)
I killed an unarmed human being.

Erecka throws her empty mug across the room in anger. It *breaks* on the stone floor. Married Couple exit in a hurry.

ERECKA

(composes herself)
It was suggested --I retire early.

MAE

Boo hoo, Death by Copper. I feels so sorry for --

Waitress appears with Mae's new drink and the check. Mae grabs her new glass and slur-toasts it high spilling some.

MAE

yuuuuuuuuuuuuuu.

Erecka stands and takes Mae's new full glass before she can drink and puts it back on Waitress's tray.

Mae jumps up swinging a fist at Erecka, misses her circling, closes both eyes, and passes out. Erecka catches her.

WAITRESS

Family. Can't kill 'em.

ERECKA

Not legally.

Erecka picks Mae up in her arms and sings more of "The Beverly Hillbillies" as they exit.

ERECKA

"You're all invited back again to this locality, To have a heapin' helpin' of their fuckin' hospitality. Hillbilly that is, sit a spell, take your shoes off."

WAITRESS

(finishes song)

"Y'all come back now, hear?!"

INT. ERECKA'S RITZ CARLTON ROOM - NEXT MORNING

A double-bed with cheap bureau and an over-stuffed chair. A sink and mirror is outside a tiny shower-stall with a toilet.

Mae is asleep in its bed under the covers. Erecka is asleep in the chair. Erecka's suit coat hangs from a closet-bar on the wall behind her. Erecka wakes when Mae stirs.

MAE

Where am's I?

ERECKA

(*cracks neck*)

Sure ain't the Ritz.

Mae sits up fully-clothed and looks around.

MAE

How'd I get in suite thirteen?

ERECKA

"Suite?!" Didn't know where you live so ...

MAE

"So" ask anybody, Shirly-locks.

ERECKA

Thought you wanted to keep "it" private.

MAE

Up here? Not likely.

ERECKA

I'll drive you to your car, then
follow you home.

Mae fingers disheveled hair then smells arm-pit and shudders.

MAE

Whoeee, needs a shower, big-time.

ERECKA

At your place. But first, why did
you bring me back up here?

MAE

All the time in the world suga',
just not --"here."

EXT. MAE'S HOUSE - LATER SAME MORNING

Small single-family brick Rambler in need of repair at the
end of a poorly-maintained one-lane state road.

Mae drives her beat-up smoking clunker to park in driveway.

Erecka parks behind Mae in earlier rental car. Both are
dressed same and exit. Erecka holds clean pants and a shirt.
She scans the home's remoteness and tries to be polite.

ERECKA

Good privacy.

MAE

Good luck.

Mae shuffles to front door, fumbles with her key to unlock,
and enters leaving door wide open. Erecka shakes her head.

ERECKA

Get in, get out, no thank --

She enters house and closes door.

A piece of glass falls out of its pane and *breaks*.

Erecka looks back out now empty frame imitating Mae.

ERECKA

"yuuuuuuuuu."

INT. MAE'S KITCHEN - LATER SAME DAY

Small kitchen with dirty pans and dishes piled high in sink.

Mae now stands in different clothes with wet hair frying eggs on a gas stove. She bends and lights a cigarette from its gas flame, inhales deep, then gets a horrible racking *cough*.

Erecka enters in new clothes drying her wet hair with towel.

ERECKA

Have another one.

MAE

Bite me.

Mae reaches for a glass, chugs its contents, then tries to refill it. Erecka takes away Mae's liquor bottle.

MAE

Ever been to a ship christenin'?

(no response)

Wanna be the boat?

Erecka hands bottle back. Mae refills her glass and chugs.

ERECKA

How you feeling, Mae?

MAE

Sunny-side up, bro.

Mae flips eggs in frying pan. One lands hanging over pan's lip. She thumb-snaps it back inside, then licks her thumb.

Erecka clears junk off the chairs and table, then sits.

ERECKA

Nice place.

MAE

I wish.

Mae pulls two paper plates off an open stack, slides an egg on each, sets both on table with two plastic forks, and sits.

ERECKA

Coffee?

MAE

You going to the sto'?

ERECKA

Might. But first --why am I here?

Mae breaks down.

ERECKA

Whoa, whoa, Mae, it's okay.

MAE

No, it's not okay, okay?!

Mae sweeps her paper-plate off onto the dirty floor.

MAE

I'm why you're here, no-nuts! But it's too late now, nothing can fix this. Shouldn't of listened to him and called you. Just go away.

ERECKA

Already did. Wasn't my choice then, but is now. I want to help if I can, so take your time.

MAE

"TIME?!" What the fuck is it with you and time?! Fuck time! There ain't never gonna' be enough fuckin' time to --

Mae trails off sobbing.

ERECKA

"Tooooo" --?

Mae jumps up, grabs glass, refills, and chugs. She tries to refill, but Erecka stands and pulls her bottle away again.

ERECKA

What?!

Mae collapses from exhaustion into Erecka's chest *sobbing*.

Erecka is surprised, this is new to her. Erecka pats Mae's back instinctively becoming her "big sister."

ERECKA

All the time in the world.

INT. MAE'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK SAME DAY

Cramped room of old mismatched furniture. Bathroom is under the stairs going up to the bedrooms. An end-table lamp is *on*.

Erecka is tidying-up.

MAE (O.S.)
Do windows, too?

Erecka looks up. Mae stands halfway down the staircase.

ERECKA
Busy hands.

MAE
Well, un-busy 'em! Already feels
like a f'n failure, don't need some
city-slicker provin' it.
(yawn-stretches)
Why'd you let me sleep so long?

ERECKA
You needed it.
(plumps pillows)
I can't help you until you want to
help yourself. No one can.

Mae walks downstairs and collapses in a beat-up chair. She
grabs a cigarette, lights it, and blows an angry smoke ring.

MAE
Great. Just what we don't need in
the family --a shrink.

ERECKA
"Family?"
(looks around sarcastic)
Don't have to be an optometrist, to
see someone hates themself. Why?

MAE
You're the dickless detective.

ERECKA
I don't ...?

MAE
That's right, you "don't!" Never
did, never wanted to.

Mae blows another smoke-ring, then punches it with her fist.

ERECKA
Never knew I needed to?

MAE
Never cared to, you mean! Never
cared enough to check up on your
own kin, your own --sister.

ERECKA

Half.

MAE

What? Which half, half-wit?

ERECKA

It's okay, mom told me.

MAE

Told you what?

ERECKA

About dad's affair, about the --
other woman.

Erecka continues to clean-up more. Mae throws a hand-made pillow angry hitting Erecka in her back who ignores it.

MAE

What the fuck do you mean, "other woman?"

ERECKA

(continues cleaning)

Do you have to keep using that word?

MAE

What word? --"Fuck?" Oh, you don't like the word, fuck? Well, fuck you, fuck-head, I am your real fuckin' sister!

Erecka *snort-laughs* in disbelieve still dusting.

ERECKA

Yeah, right.

No response. Erecka turns.

Mae glares at Erecka exhaling smoke out her nose like a bull.

Erecka's eyes go wide-open in surprise.

ERECKA

What?! No, she, her, I mean mom, said dad had a lover?

MAE

"Lover?!" Is that what it's called?

ERECKA

I don't under --? Why would she --?
You're my sister? You? No, that's
not possible. How could you --?
(in complete denial)
Are you sure?

MAE

"Sure?!" Jesus! Don't you have any
god damn memories of us? Damn!

ERECKA

Some, sure, a little. But I was
young, a child really. Wait --?

Erecka falls onto the torn couch as memories overwhelm her.

ERECKA

Things were fine until mom woke me
one night and said we had to go.

Mae looks away smoking like an angry chimney stack.

ERECKA

Mom said you were staying because
you weren't really my sis --.
(fighting own epiphany)
Why would she say that?!

ERECKA

Since you didn't come to mom's
funeral, I figured --?

MAE

You didn't come to dad's, so I
figured --?

Mae *coughs* up a loogie, then *force-spits* it out the door's
missing window-pane. Erecka is beyond disgusted.

MAE

What reason she give for leavin' me
behind?

ERECKA

She said dad beat her so she had to
get away, but that you'd be okay.

MAE

You remember him hittin' her?

ERECKA

Not really. Don't remember much
really.

Mae dead-pan stares at Erecka who doesn't want to remember.

ERECKA

They yelled a lot, remember that.
But no, no beatings. That, I would
remember. Dad sure loved you
though. Do remember that.

MAE

(dry-spits to side)
Remember us walkin' to school?

ERECKA

(smiles)
Stood up for me against bullies.
Pretty good right cross I remember.

MAE

That --you remember, huh?

ERECKA

Sure, that's why I became a cop --
to protect others.

MAE

Yeah, well, didn't do too good job
protecting me much, now did you?
(no response)
Why "did" you leave me up here all
alone all these years, shit-head?

ERECKA

Hey shit-for-brains, ask her! I was
just a kid. She took me, nothing I
could do.

MAE

Me neither.

Erecka catches Mae's innuendo and holds up a pointer-finger.

ERECKA

Whoa, okay, hold on --

Erecka becomes a detective again and extrapolates.

ERECKA

So my Mom, told me, you're not my
real relative. Why? To make me not
care about you?
(deeper detective mode)
Okay, sure, that works. But what
would make a mother lie to her only
daughter about her own true sister?

MAE

Shame?

ERECKA

Of what? I mean, what could any daughter do that would make her own mother that ashamed?

If Erecka had a white-board, she'd be outlining on it by now.

ERECKA

No, that's not a reason to lie to me about my only sibling.

(looks at Mae questioning)

You are my sibling --right?

Mae throws another pillow at Erecka who catches it.

MAE

Maybe. Or may be --you're ashamed of me, too?

ERECKA

Not now, not of this. Why would I?

No, wait, hold on, okay --?

(searches for answers)

So "she," mom, was the one ashamed.

But then who the fuck was shamed?

MAE

Ask anyone, Horten.

ERECKA

Whom? You? You were just a teen, a kid really. What could any child do that could be so wrong?

MAE

Nothing I "could" do.

ERECKA

Stop it. Stop speaking in riddles.

MAE

I'm not. That's what you want to hear.

Erecka really doesn't want to know and punches her pillow.

ERECKA

God Damn It!. If you didn't, and she didn't, and I didn't, that only leaves --

Erecka jumps up knocking over the lamp. It's shade focuses the light on her face like she's being interrogated.

ERECKA

What the fuck is going on?!
(throws pillow at Mae)
Why would my own fucking mother
want to keep me away from my only
fucking sister?!

MAE

Which "fucking" one?

Mae tosses Erecka a portrait-picture from the end-table.

Erecka fumble catches the picture to stare at it dumbfounded.

In the picture, Mae is hugging BUNNY BRAUN, Mullatto, 40s, well-endowed, with bleached-straight Platinum-Blonde hair.

ERECKA

Saw this earlier, thought maybe,
you know, you two were gay.

MAE

How long it take you to make dick-
tective, Tracy?

ERECKA

Only five years, which is --
(catches up finally)
"Which one?!" There could only be
one. You! I mean, I only remember
you, so a second baby could only
come after I, we left. But then,
mom couldn't be her --? No. Could
she? Of course not. So how could I
have a second sister unless --?

Erecka jumps back dropping the picture like a hot potato. Its picture glass *breaks*. Erecka steps back further. Her heel kicks the fallen lamp which rolls away throwing shadows.

ERECKA

Fuck, Me! --Dad? --You?

Tears flow down Mae's cheeks as Erecka paces with both hands behind her back like TV's *Columbo*.

ERECKA

"Uh, just one more thing." If you
are my sister, then your daughter
would be my --?

MAE

Other.

ERECKA

(spins to Mae shocked)
You're --"the other woman?"

MAE

Mom found dad doin' me that night
she took you, and left --ME!

Mae turns away ashamed.

Erecka is frozen in time as brain cells explode, then kicks
the fallen pillow around the room.

ERECKA

God damn, mother-fucker, shit,
piss, Fuckkkkk!

Erecka football-punts the pillow.

Pillow sticks in the door window's empty pane.

ERECKA

What the hell?!

MAE

(sobbing)
God, did damn me. But it was you
and mom --done left me in Hell.

Erecka grabs Mae's shoulders and pulls her to standing.

ERECKA

No! You've nothing to be ashamed
of. You were a child, powerless,
there was nothing you could do.

MAE

(voice cracks)
Sounds like you done give this
speech bee-fore?

Erecka's face turns flush. Her lower lip trembles.

ERECKA

Too many times. Oh, Mae, sis, I
didn't --?!

MAE

(kitten-eyes look up)
Now you does.

The fallen lamp's bulb flickers, then burns-out. The outside street light shines through the windows showing their silhouettes as both cry hugging.

INT. MAE'S KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

Kitchen is now clean and organized. Washed dishes and pots dry in a dish-rack. Erecka wears an apron cooking a spaghetti dinner on the stove.

Mae enters and sits at the table drinking coffee then toasts.

MAE

Thanks for going to the store.

ERECKA

Your cupboard was definitely bare.

MAE

Mother fuckin' Hubbard, that's me.

ERECKA

No, don't think so. Pretty sure she works at the Ritz.

(laughs to self)

Sounds different when you say it.

MAE

Me?! You the one with a' accent?

ERECKA

"Me?!"

Erecka pulls a strand of spaghetti out of its boiling water and throws it against the stove's back wall. It sticks.

ERECKA

Perfect. When does your ...?

MAE

What was that?

ERECKA

What was what? Oh, the spaghetti. If it sticks, it's done. See ...

MAE

I "see" --why you're still a spinster.

ERECKA

Widow.

MAE

You was hitched?

ERECKA

Twenty years.

MAE

He leave real sudden-like?

Erecka stirs spaghetti and answers with back to Mae.

ERECKA

She. --Yeah. Way too sudden.
Cancer, breast.

MAE

You're a les --?!
(catches herself)
Sorry, didn't know?

ERECKA

"Now you does."

MAE

Wish I'd met him, uh, her, uh,
whatever.

Erecka tosses her purse to Mae who catches. Mae opens it, and flips through its picture-case to stop at one.

Picture is of Erecka's WIFE, Asian, who lays sickly in a hospital bed with an I.V. Erecka stands next to her wearing a cheap Santa Claus suit. They're holding hands in love.

ERECKA

Surgery went well, so I brought her
pumpkin pie for Thanksgiving. We
were hoping she'd be out by
Christmas. But just in case, I
dressed up early. She loved it.
Tweeted our picture.

(stirs sauce angry)

Week later, the hospital called my
office. But I was out working on a
cold case. By the time I got their
cold message --

Mae closes the picture-wallet with reverence and looks up.

MAE

When'd she die?

Erecka grabs the pot to dump its spaghetti in a colander sitting in the sink. Its steam envelopes her face.

ERECKA
Merry f'n Christmas.

Mae stands to hug Erecka from behind.

MAE
Aren't we a pair?

Erecka pats Mae's hands around front of her waist.

ERECKA
Yes --yes we are.

Pot on stove begins to *bubble-pop* boiling sauce into the air. Drops spit-airborne onto both of their exposed hands. They jump apart. Erecka pulls the pan off its burner to cover it.

MAE
Ahhhh man, life sucks. Why bother?

ERECKA
Why did you?

Mae falls in a chair with elbows on table and head in hands.

Erecka turns off the stove to sit across from her.

ERECKA
I want to help, really, but I can't, until you tell me how.

MAE
It's about my daughter.

Erecka leans back folding her arms as a professional LEO.

ERECKA
My, half-sister.

EXT. FOREPLAY TOPLESS BAR - NOW MIDNIGHT

A dive-Bar has a neon sign flashing, "Foreplay." Four neon-lighted cartoon-silhouettes of strippers rock back and forth on either side. Mostly old pick-up trucks and cars are parked in front. 1970's loud *music* emanates from its jukebox inside.

Erecka parks her rental car and exits now wearing jeans and a flannel shirt. She hears a once famous disco song inside.

ERECKA
Disco night --for degenerates.

Erecka strikes *John Travolta's* iconic disco-pose, then enters *Hip Hop* dancing and *snapping* her fingers to the music.

INT. FOREPLAY BAR - CONTINUOUS

Elevated lit-from-below plastic dance floor in center with a dancer pole. Bar stools are around it and booths along walls.

PATRONS, male Rednecks, drunk, chain-smoke and *cat-call*.

JEANNIE, 40s, their Server, not topless, attends Patrons.

Erecka enters and scans room, then looks at Dancer on stage.

ZADIE, 50s, African-American, has a flabby birth-paunch and saggy breasts. Both flop as she dances. Erecka double-takes.

ERECKA

Mom?

Erecka shakes the thought away, then makes her way to the only open stool and sits. Jeannie comes for Erecka's order. Both have to yell over Patrons going crazy as Zadie exits.

JEANNIE

I'm Jeannie!

Erecka flips open her *M.P.D.C. Retired* Badge-Case.

ERECKA

Rub My Lamp!

JEANNIE

Must Be Lookin' For Bunny!

Jeannie points behind Erecka who spins on her stool to now see the new dancer. It's BUNNY who is topless and squatting on the stage with her crotch inches from Erecka's face.

BUNNY

Squeal Like A Piggie!

Patrons begin *squealing*. It sounds like a slaughter house.

ERECKA

I'm Your, uh --AUNT!

BUNNY

Welcome --To The Family!

Bunny grabs the back of Erecka's head to pull it between her breasts, then shakes them. Erecka fights to pull her head out, then flips open her *D.C. Retirement* badge-case again.

ERECKA
JUST, TALK!

DEPUTY STEM COCKER, Caucasian Redneck, 30s, is off-duty from the town's Sheriff Department so is wearing street-clothes. He dangles his *West Virginia* Badge Case in Erecka's face.

STEM
I Got Ones, Too!
(to Bunny)
She botherin' You, Honey-Bunny?!

Bunny gets on all-fours and arches her back.

Patrons at opposite end of bar get out one-dollar bills.

BUNNY
I Wish!

Stem slowly spins Erecka on her stool to lean-in menacing.

STEM
'Lesson yours got a West Virginny
Seal on it, beat it. Miss --?

ERECKA
Detective. Professional Courtesy
Deputy, just need to talk to her!

STEM
(to Bunny)
Wanna' Talk?!

BUNNY
What?!

STEM
TALK!

BUNNY
FUCK!

Bunny squats again to bounce up and down on her haunches licking her lips at Erecka. Stem waves for her to go back to dancing. She dances away sexy. Stem steps nose-to-nose with Erecka threatening.

STEM
Git, or I'll throw the book at ya'!

ERECKA
Don't bother! I'd throw it right
back!

Stem draws back to throw a punch, but Erecka jumps up to throw an arm around his neck bending him down while squeezing choke-pressure with her other hand.

ERECKA

Keep calm, country boy!

Erecka releases Stem, then walks backwards holding up both hands. She looks up at Bunny and points to her wristwatch.

ERECKA

Later!

Bunny tweaks and pulls her nipples out nodding enthusiastic.

Erecka's mouth falls open as she stumbles backwards exiting.

Stem *coughs* massaging his throat while glaring at Erecka.

INT. ERECKA'S RENTAL CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Erecka gets in and sits quiet absorbing Bunny's behavior.

Mae sits up in the back seat.

MAE

Well?

ERECKA

Well done. She wanted to fuck me.

Mae starts hitting Erecka's shoulders from behind.

MAE

Don't you ever joke about ...!

Erecka spins in her seat catching Mae's wrists.

ERECKA

Hey, she said it, not me!

Mae stops. Ereck lets go and turns forward in her seat.

ERECKA

We need to get her out of there. I saw track marks between her toes.

MAE

She, she's usin'?

ERECKA

Heroin's cheaper than a six-pack.

MAE

(falls back in her seat)
Life is one big dog poo. And I'm
its biggest steamin' pile.

ERECKA

Hey, shit happens, doesn't mean you
have to wallow in it.

MAE

You should know --pig!

Erecka spins in seat to pull Mae forward by her shoulders.

ERECKA

What you've been through would
knock anyone for a loop! Just
hearing about it bowled me over.
But get this, you are my sister,
and time does heal all wounds!

Erecka throws Mae into back seat and turns forward in own.

ERECKA

If --you have someone to help patch
you up. You didn't, because I
didn't know. But now I do, and I am
true blue. Got that?

(looks up in rear mirror)

And I ain't leaving you till it's
all good! Understood?!

Mae half-smiles and nods back in mirror.

ERECKA

(starts car)

Good. Because I sure don't. But
first, I need to get you home, then
I need to get some sleep so I can
come up with a Bunny-snare. Hey --?

Erecka looks at Mae in rear-view mirror again.

ERECKA

Never said what you do for a
living. When do you work?

MAE

Week-ends.

ERECKA

Where? Piggly Wiggly?

In Erecka's mirror, she sees Mae point straight ahead.

MAE
Wiggly-wiggly.

Erecka's confused, then looks out windshield at the Bar and absentmindedly *restarts* engine making its starter *whine*.

ERECKA
(in perfect *Gomer Pyle*)
"Sur-prize, sur-prize, sur-prize."

They drive away.

EXT. BECKLEY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - NEXT MORNING

Two-story government building with large parking lot in back.

Erecka, wearing her now very wrinkled airplane-suit, jogs up its steps in running shoes.

INT. BECKLEY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Old rusty file cabinets and a messy desk behind which sits SHERIFF PURDY, 40s, tall, beer-belly, king of the Rednecks, in full Sheriff tan uniform reading a file folder.

Single *knuckle-knock* on closed door, then is opened by DEPUTY JANE-ANNE, late-40s, Caucasian, an "I Love Lucy" redhead, in full Deputy's tan uniform.

JANE-ANNE
Erecka Braun is here to see you,
boss. She's ...

Sheriff closes to wave his file at her.

SHERIFF
Already knows --who "she's" is.

Jane-Anne exits as Erecka enters past her.

ERECKA
Sheriff Purdy, I'm ...

Sheriff holds up file again to wave at Erecka who nods.

ERECKA
Wanted to apologize for getting a
little too --familiar, with one of
your deputies last night.

SHERIFF
"Familiar?!"

Sheriff takes a big bite off his tobacco chaw and chews.

SHERIFF

We's not "fah-mill-ee-ar" with that term when applyin' to Assault on a Police Occifer.

ERECKA

"Assault?!" I simply stopped him from escalating our event as I was attempting to vacate the premises.

SHERIFF

Uuueee! Gonna' have to start carrying around a dick-tionary while you're in town, girlie-girl.

ERECKA

"Girlie-Girl?" Sir, I was not ...

SHERIFF

"Sir?!" I works for a livin', darlin'. Now as I understands it, you chose to early retire, so you're gonna' have to let go a' still feelin' like you're one of the 'good ole boys.'

ERECKA

Never cared for that term.

SHERIFF

Don't matta'. Done spoke with your Chief back home, and he seems to share the same feelin's about you. He said somethin' or nuther about you havin' --"a short fuse?"

ERECKA

Only when I see injustice --or stupidity.

(to self)

Like here.

(to Sheriff)

Guess we'll just have to disagree to agree. Thank you for your time. Sorry to bother ...

SHERIFF

"Bother?!"

Sheriff spits black tobacco juice into a brass spittoon next to his desk. Spittoon echoes *ba-ding*.

SHERIFF

Tweren't no bother a-tall. Matter a' fact, downright convenient you droppin' by. Would you like to pray on it?

ERECKA

Excuse me?

SHERIFF

No ma'am, don't think I will. Mind putting your hands behind together, like you're prayin'?

ERECKA

I hope you're not suggesting --?

SHERIFF

Ouuueee! Don't never suggest nuthin', baby. I orders.

Sheriff *snaps* his fingers.

Deputy Jane-Anne enters opening her handcuffs.

SHERIFF

Place the Suspect under arrest for assault and battery on a law-man.

JANE-ANNE

Please put your hands behind your back, ma'am.

Erecka is stunned, then stands. Jane-Anne cuffs her behind.

SHERIFF

See how "convenient" that were? Saved us all the trouble of havin' to come find youuuuuuu.

ERECKA

I get one phone call.

SHERIFF

Sure, just as soon as those pesky phone folk fix it. Judge'll see you on tomorrow's docket.

Sheriff back-hand waves for Jane-Anne to take Erecka away.

ERECKA

Nice town you don't run here, Sheriff. Can't wait to leave.

Jane-Anne pushes Erecka ahead out closing door behind.

SHERIFF

That be the general idee-a, girl.

INT. BECKLEY BASEMENT JAIL - THAT NIGHT

Basement has four cells, two across from the other two. Each has a metal cot and sink. A single bathroom is at end of the hall. Stairs go up its opposite end. A hand-written sign above the only pay-phone by the stairs reads, "Outta Odor."

Erecka is the jail's only prisoner and sings in her cell. She's a baritone and not that bad. Her voice *echoes*.

ERECKA (O.S.)

"No-body know, da' trouble I see."

INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE ERECKA'S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Erecka lays on her bunk, in shirt and pants, with hands behind her head. Her jacket is folded neatly over the sink.

ERECKA

"No-body know," but mee-eee.

She hears *footsteps* coming down the stairs and sits up.

Mae appears outside her bars. Jane-Anne, out-of-uniform, stands beside her. They are wearing matching outfits.

ERECKA

Helluva' reunion, sis.

MAE

Sorry for gettin' you in the middle a' all this.

ERECKA

All of --what?

Jane-Anne taps a finger against an ear, then points up.

Erecka understands the jail is bugged and changes subject.

ERECKA

I had to come back home to get arrested. Know a good attorney?

MAE

Just the one I used last time I were in here.

ERECKA

"Last time?!" Hope it was the first time?

JANE-ANNE

More like, thirty-first.

ERECKA

Well, at least things can't get any worse for our dysfunctional family.

Noise of someone being dragged unwillingly down the stairs.

JANE-ANNE

Is that --?

MAE

Bunny??

Bunny, in her stripper costume, is covered in blood. She is pulled down the stairs by DEPUTY ONE and DEPUTY TWO, both 20s and *Beavis and Butthead* Rednecks for real, in tan uniforms.

BUNNY

Said he was shot 'fore I found him!

DEPUTY TWO

How'd his blood get all over you!?

BUNNY

Told you umpteen times, I was tryin' to give him C, R, P!

DEPUTY ONE

Your mouth to somethin' alright, since his pants was down.

DEPUTY TWO

Exercise your right to remain --

Deputy One and Deputy Two throw Bunny into the open cell across from Erecka and *slam* its door locking it.

DEPUTY ONE

behind bars!

DEPUTY TWO

Stem was a friend a' ours!

JANE-ANNE

"Stem?!" Deputy Cocker?

DEPUTY TWO/ONE

What you doin' down here Jane-Anne?

MAE

My best friend since higher school
brought me to see my only sister
because your boss won't let me!

Deputy One and Deputy Two point straight up whispering.

DEPUTY ONE

Best leave 'fore he hears.

DEPUTY TWO

Done charged Bunny with murder.

Bunny grabs her cell's bars and tries to shake them.

BUNNY

I, did, not, shoot, him!

ERECKA

Don't say another word, Bunny!
(to Deputies)
What happened?

DEPUTY ONE

You'll hear all about it in the
morn, convict.

BUNNY

Fuck You, little piggies. I didn't
kill him and you all know why!

Deputy One pulls his nightstick to hit her exposed fingers.

DEPUTY ONE

Quiet, slut!

Bunny jumps back from her bars holding her knuckles in pain.

Mae jumps onto Deputy One's back pummeling his head.

MAE

Don't hits my daughter, hog-head!

Deputy Two points at Erecka while pulling Mae off Deputy One.

DEPUTY TWO

She's her half-sister!

ERECKA

Does everyone know everything about
everybody up here?

Mae, Deputy One and Deputy Two, stop fighting to look at her.

DEPUTY ONE/TWO/MAE

Yeah?

Deputy Two grabs Mae's arm. Deputy One grabs Mae's other arm.

JANE-ANNE

Gently, boys.

Both Deputies throw Mae into the open cell next to Bunny.

DEPUTY ONE

Ass-ault and battery onna' police
officer, Bitch!

Mae spits between her bars into Deputy Two's face.

DEPUTY TWO

Times two!

Deputy Two wipes off his face turning to Erecka.

DEPUTY TWO

This run in your family?

ERECKA

(holds hands up)
Hey, didn't even know I had one,
till yesterday.

Deputy One, Deputy Two, and Jane-Anne, look from Erecka to Bunny to Mae standing in their cells holding onto their bars.

DEPUTY ONE

Gots one now.

INT. BECKLEY COURTROOM - NEXT MORNING

Second floor of government building has a small courtroom.

Mae, Bunny, and Erecka, sit at the Defense Table, all dressed same, but now worse wrinkled, talking to ATTORNEY, African-American female, 40s, wearing an expensive suit, who speaks with a cultured South African accent.

Jane-Anne, now in uniform, enters from Judge's side-door.

JANE-ANNE

All Rise!

A few retired male SPECTATORS, mostly African-American, are sprinkled in the pews.

REPORTER, Asian female, late-teens, short and feisty, in dress shirt and tie, takes notes on a yellow legal pad.

ALL stand as JUDGE, African-American male, 60s, balding, enters from Jane-Anne's side-door and sits.

JANE-ANNE

Be seated.

JUDGE

As all three Defendants are related, will their cases be joined?

PROSECUTOR, Caucasian male, 30s, in a three-piece suit, stands behind the Prosecution Table. He orates like *Clarence Darrow*, animated, using a thick Southern accent.

PROSCECUTOR

Just Erecka Braun and Nellie Mae
...

MAE

"Just" Mae.

PROSCECUTOR

Mae Braun, your Honor. Bunny Braun is charged with murder.

JUDGE

Interesting morning. Let's do the easy ones first. Proceed.

Attorney, Erecka, and Mae, stand.

JUDGE

Erecka Braun and Nellie Mae Braun, you are charged with assault on police officers. How do you plea?

ATTORNEY

We ask both cases be Dismissed, your Honor.

PROSCECUTOR

"Both?!" Your Hona'! I now ask to separate the two aforementioned cases.

JUDGE

Horse done left the barn on that race, Counselor. On what grounds does the Defense request dismissal?

ATTORNEY

In Erecka Braun's case, no witness for the prosecution can be produced.

PROSCECUTOR

Due to Stem being deceased by the Defendant's sister!

ERECKA

Half.

BUNNY

Said you was my Aunt 'tween my titties?

SPECTATORS sit forward *murmuring*. Reporter writes on her pad.

Mae hits Erecka's shoulder. Judge looks over his glasses.

JUDGE

Excuse me?

Jane-Anne whispers in the Judge's ear who then taps gavel.

JUDGE

Proceed with your argument.

ATTORNEY

All other witnesses saw the First Defendant only put her arm around the Officer's shoulder, smile, then leave.

Sheriff enters and sits. Attorney sees him.

ATTORNEY

Plus your Honor, both Ericka and Mae Braun were not allowed to make their legal phone calls.

PROSCECUTOR

Your Honaaaaa' --?!

Judge raises a hand to stop Proscecutor, who does.

JUDGE

Is that true, Sheriff?

SHERIFF

Uh, is what true?

Judge glares hard, so Sheriff jumps back up.

SHERIFF

Your honor?

JUDGE

Were both Defendants denied the opportunity to contact legal counsel by phone?

SHERIFF

No sir, they was never denied -- just never did.

ATTORNEY

Because the jail's phone is "out of odor," your Honor.

JUDGE

Fix it, today!

SHERIFF

Don't rightly know if'n --?

JUDGE

Don't care "if'n" you have to get two cups from the *Freezie Freeze* and string them together --Fix It!

Sheriff nods sheepish as he sits. Judge raps his gavel.

JUDGE

Cases dismissed. Next.

PROSCECUTOR

"Dismissed?!" Your Hona', the First Defendant ...

JUDGE

Is a highly decorated retired-with-honors city detective. Yes, I know all about her. Next!

PROSCECUTOR

I understands, your Hona', but Ms. Nellie Mae ...

MAE

Just, Mae.

PROSCECUTOR

Mae Braun, did attack, choke, and spit on two Deputies while visiting the First Defendant, uh, her sister ...

ERECKA

Half.

PROSCECUTOR

While in jail last night.

MAE

I only spit on one?

JUDGE

Ms. Braun, you've been in front of me before, and I warned you then.

Mae has her hands behind her back. Erecka reaches behind and puts on a wrist-lock. As Mae goes to respond, Erecka twists.

MAE

And I told you "then" --Ow!

ATTORNEY

Your Honor, Mae Braun was denied Visitation Rights --
(holds up four fingers)
four times.

JUDGE

Is that true, Sheriff?

Sheriff reacts, *Who me?*

Jane-Anne *whispers* in Judge's ear.

JUDGE

The Sheriff's Department is hereby ordered to maintain a Daily Log Book for all jail visitation requests that will be turned in monthly to the Clerk of the Court.

Judge *raps* gavel and stares at Sheriff until Sheriff nods.

ATTORNEY

Second, Mae Braun was only defending her daughter who was attacked by one of the Deputies.

JUDGE

"Attacked?"

ATTORNEY

Bunny Braun was inside her cell holding her bars when said Deputy willfully and with malice struck her fingers with his nightstick.

Bunny holds up her bruised hand. Judge glares at Sheriff.

SHERIFF

First I heard?

Jane-Anne whispers in Judge's ear who then *raps* gavel.

JUDGE

Sheriff's Department is hereby ordered to install a video-camera in its Jail and maintain a taped record when prisoners are housed.

Sheriff shakes his head.

JUDGE

Expensive visit for your department today, 'eh Sheriff? --Continue.

ATTORNEY

Third, any woman might be expected to spit on any man calling her a "bitch" and her daughter a "slut." Even one in uniform, your Honor.

Judge glares at Sheriff who is now deer-in-the-headlights.

Judge *bangs* his gavel with final authority.

JUDGE

Both cases dismissed. --Next.

Prosecutor shakes his head. Bad day for a good barrister.

PROSCECUTOR

Ms. Bunny "no middle name" Braun.

Erecka twists Mae's wrist behind her back again. Mae yanks her hand out in front to hit Erecka on her shoulder.

MAE

OW! --What?!

ERECKA

No middle name?

MAE

Didn't see no need what with Bunny bein' so uu-nee-g.

ERECKA

No wonder she became a stripper.
'Course helps when mom's one, too!

BUNNY

Hey, my mom was a damn good one!

MAE

"Was?!"

Judge *raps* gavel hard. All Three Defendants look at him.

JUDGE

Are The Three Stooges through
airing their comedic laundry in
public?

Mae slaps Erecka's shoulders. Bunny grabs Erecka's nose.
Erecka pushes both of them away in opposite directions.

ERECKA

Spread Out!

Mae and Erecka *whisper* angry to each other. Judge scowls.

JUDGE

Detective and Ms. Mae Braun, your
cases have been dismissed. Please
sit in the Gallery and stifle
yourselves, or better yet --scram.

Erecka and Mae nod assurance to Bunny then sit behind the
railing in the first pew.

ATTORNEY

We ask that Bunny's case also be
Dismissed, your Honor.

PROSCECUTOR

(jumps up)

Your Hona', the Defendant was found
at the scene, covered in his blood,
bending over the deceased's body!

ATTORNEY

Your Honor, the only witness
available at this time is in fact
the Defendant. Therefore, I request
she be allowed to make her verbal
statement directly to this Court.
The same statement she repeatedly
told the Sheriff and both Deputies
before and after she was arrested,
even though she was never read --
her *Miranda Rights*.

Judge tosses gavel over his shoulder. Mary-Jane retrieves it.

JUDGE

Guess we won't be needing that today, 'eh Sheriff?

SHERIFF

(jumps up)

Your Hona', it's true, I done put her under a-rest, but then I told my Deputies to, so naturally I assumed ...?

Jane-Anne hands the gavel back to Judge who *bangs* it.

JUDGE

Stop! Repeat that last word's first three letters every time you charge someone in the future. Defendant's request is granted. But we need to make it legal first.

Judge stares at Sheriff who is slow on the uptake.

SHERIFF

Oh! Uh, Miss Bunny Braun, you were under arrest for killing one Deputy Stem Cocker. You have, uh, one --
(counts on fingers)
right to remain mostly silent. Two, anything you does say will be ...

ERECKA

"Can!" Can and will be used.

SHERIFF

That's what I said?
(to Bunny)
In a law court. Third, you has a right to talk at an attorney ...

JUDGE

Say that last part again.

SHERIFF

Which-a one? Oh, about a confab with a legaller?

Judge makes his fingers into universal telephone-call sign.

Sheriff, *Gets it*, and looks back to Bunny nodding.

SHERIFF

to have him --or her --

Sheriff looks proudly at Judge for "*Me Too*" approval.

Judge stares deadpan. Sherriff *coughs* nervous and continues.

SHERIFF

with you during questioning. Also,
you gots the right to, to --?

Sheriff looks at his four fingers, then stares at his thumb.
He lost his way a long time ago, never to be found again.

Erecka reaches into a pocket and hands a well-used *Miranda Card* to Sheriff who reads it, then points to Attorney.

SHERIFF

But she gots one now?

Judge *groans*, stares down, and circles a finger to move on.

SHERIFF

You understand everything I just
said and still wants to confess?

ERECKA

Talk! Want to "talk" to us. Christ!

SHERIFF

So help ya' Jesus. Well --?

BUNNY

"Well?"

Judge drops his forehead on desk and talks to his desktop.

JUDGE

Do you understand these rights as
they have been read to you?

BUNNY

Maybe?

JUDGE

(sits back up)
Call the Defendant.

PROSCECUTOR

I call Ms. Bunny Braun to the
Stand, your Honor.

Sheriff tries to hand *Card* back to Erecka who hand-motions,
Keep it. Sheriff sits reading it with lips moving silent.

Attorney sits down.

Bunny sashays to the Witness Chair.

BUNNY

Thanks a lot your Honorish. You're pretty cool.

(winks at him)

And kinda' cute.

JANE-ANNE

Raise your right hand.

Bunny raises her left hand.

JANE-ANNE

Your other right.

Bunny switches hands on Bible to raise her right hand.

JANE-ANNE

Do you solemnly swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth so help you God?

BUNNY

Only if She don't smite me.

Erecka drops to shake her head *mumbling*.

Judge *taps* gavel.

ATTORNEY

Yes or no only, please.

BUNNY

Yes'm, always. Don't do no good to lie any which-way.

JUDGE

Why not?

BUNNY

Because you always gets caught. My momma done taught me that much.

Erecka snaps her head upright, then gives Mae a thumbs-up.

JANE-ANNE

Witness will be seated.

Bunny sits quiet. ALL stare at her. She's clueless, always.

ATTORNEY

Repeat your earlier statement for the Court, please.

Bunny has to think hard. It hurts.

BUNNY

So continuin' on, I just come off
my late shift. Pretty good night,
since it was Friday and all my
Regulars got paid in cash.

(glares at Sheriff)

And I wants all my dollars back!

Sheriff chagrins as Judge *taps* gavel.

BUNNY

So I was countin' my bills when I
heard this "pop" sound. You know,
like from a paper lunch-bag? Well,
it come from the back office.

(snort-laugh like Mae)

Now trust me, you don't never
wanna' go back there for no reason,
so I didn't. But then I heard this
thump-sound, you know, like a dead
deer hittin' the ground.

Bunny *slaps* flat of her hand on Judge's desk. Judge jumps.

BUNNY

Kinda' like that. Well, that ain't
usual, so I knocked on the door,
but nobody answered. So I --

(breaks down)

cracked it open a lil' to see
what's what, until I sees --.

Bunny loses it. Her Attorney stands.

ATTORNEY

The body of Deputy Stem Cocker. Her
fiancé, your Honor.

Attorney sits as Mae jumps up.

MAE

"Fiancé?!" When the Hell did that
happen?!

Judge *slams* gavel. Erecka pulls Mae back down who fights.

BUNNY

Was gonna' tell you --
(points at Erecka)
after she left.

ERECKA

(points at own chest)
Me?! What the heck did I do?

BUNNY

(back to Mae)

On account of you actin' so crazy-
like that your long lost sister ...

ERECKA

(jumps up stab-pointing)

Aha! So you knew I was your half-
sister when you said you wanted to
fuck me.

Spectators *gasp*. Reporter writes. Judge *smashes* gavel.

JUDGE

Detective Braun! Do you know what
"contempt" is?

Erecka nods, makes zipper-motion across her lips, and sits.

JUDGE

Good, because that's exactly what I
have for you at this moment. Bunny
Braun, please continue only if you
can stick to just the facts.

BUNNY

So my Lil' Steme was lying on the
floor bleedin' bad, and then he, he
just looked up at me smilin'. I, I
took a class long ago to learn C,
R, P, and tried to remember, but
when you see the first man that
ever made you feel special dyin' --

Bunny breaks-down again. Attorney stands buttoning coat.

ATTORNEY

Your Honor, no weapons were found
at the scene, or on her, and the
office's rear door was open.

JUDGE

Mister City Attorney, under Rule
503, is there actual "evidence" to
present to the Court at this time?

PROSCECUTOR

Uh, none "at this time" your Hona'.

JUDGE

Then based on the evidence "not"
presented at this Hearing, I have
no choice but to dismiss without
prejudice all charges.

Judge taps gavel. Bunny jumps up to hug Attorney. Mae jumps up to hug Bunny across rail. Erecka stands. Mae and Bunny hug her. Erecka is surprised. Prosecutor goes to talk to Sheriff. Spectators stand to leave. Reporter writes furious.

JUDGE

FREEZE!

ALL in courtroom freeze in whatever position they're in.

JUDGE

Be seated.

Jane-Anne looks at Judge, *That's my line?* ALL sit quiet.

JUDGE

Detective Braun, what was your Solve Ratio before you retired?

ERECKA

My --? Ninety-percent, your Honor.

JUDGE

And how many Open Cases after you retired?

ERECKA

"After?" Oh, I assisted part-time in an unofficial capacity and we were able to close all but five.

JUDGE

Would you be willing to work with our Sheriff's Department in an "unofficial capacity" on this one?

Sheriff jumps up. Judge wags gavel at him as a warning.

ERECKA

Hold on your Honor, this is one heck of a place to visit, but I sure wouldn't wanna' work here.

Judge points gavel's handle at Erecka threatening like a gun.

ERECKA

Happy to help in any way, sir.

PROSCECUTOR

But your Hona'?! She's related to the Suspect.

JUDGE

Do you believe that to be true,
Detective Braun?

ERECKA

Honestly, your Honor? I don't know
what the heck to believe up here.

Bunny and Mae glare at Erecka.

JUDGE

Then Sheriff, I instruct you give
Detective Braun full access and
cooperation in your investigation.

Judge *raps* his gavel, then stands to exit.

JANE-ANNE

All rise!

ALL stand. Spectators *discussion-mumble*.

Reporter goes to Erecka. She speaks perfect English.

REPORTER

Detective Braun, I'm a reporter for
the Beckley Herald. Great story
today. What are your thoughts?

ERECKA

Your readers --don't want to know.

INT. MAE'S KITCHEN - THAT NIGHT

Pots and pans on stove have been cooked in.

Mae, Bunny, and Erecka, sit at the table finishing *chicken-n-fixin's*. Erecka licks her fingers.

ERECKA

Finger lickin' good, ladies.

BUNNY

She did all the work. Speaking of --
(stands)
see ya'.

ERECKA

Sit down.

BUNNY

But I'm late for work?

ERECKA

No, you're not. Foreplay is closed until after I examine its Crime Scene tomorrow.

BUNNY

(sits hard, angry)
You got that much clout?

ERECKA

Didn't ask for it, but --yeah.
(claps and rubs hands)
So, here we are all together, at home, for the first time as a -- whatever. We've all had a nice meal, so now it's girl-talk time.

MAE

About?

ERECKA

Well, first you call me up on top of "Peyton Place" mountain after forty years to drop two heretofore unknown relative bombshells on me.

BUNNY

"Here's two" what?

MAE

Didn't know we're all related.

BUNNY

Yeah, right.

ERECKA

I didn't! Then asked for help with your daughter --

BUNNY

Which I don't needs, thank you very much.

ERECKA

And when I do try, I'm arrested for the first time in my life, stand trial for a felony, then ordered by some backwoods judge to assist in a murder investigation involving both my "sisters." Well --?

(stares, no response)

Well shit, I'd say that makes this a stay-at-home night for all parties, right?

Crickets.

ERECKA

Right. So lets all move into the living room and get comfortable. It's going to be a looong evening.

BUNNY

This is bullshit, I'm outta' here!

Bunny stands. Erecka handcuffs her own wrist to Bunny's.

BUNNY

What the --?

ERECKA

House Arrest.

Bunny tries to bite Erecka's wrist like a rabid dog.

BUNNY

Fuck you crazy Asian bitch, I'll bite your dick off!

Erecka pulls out a small Taser and *sparks* it.

BUNNY/MAE

You, wouldn't, dare?

ERECKA

No dare, gold-plated guarantee. Whatever life both of you had before I got here, is over.

Erecka imitates the original Pac-Man game ending *sound*.

ERECKA

There's a new dickless in town.

Bunny goes berserk pulling-away and *slaps* Erecka who *Tasers* Bunny's leg. Bunny falls into her chair vibrating.

BUNNY

Aieeee-eee-eee-eee!

Mae stands *slapping* Erecka and pulling her hair. Erecka *Tasers* Mae's arm who falls into her chair vibrating.

MAE

Aieeee-eee-eee-eee!

Erecka blows across her Taser's barrel-tip.

ERECKA

Now that, was worth the price of admission.

INT. MAE'S LIVING ROOM - NOW MIDNIGHT

Furniture and lamps are knocked over. Room is in disarray.

Erecka sits on the couch between Bunny and Mae. All are disheveled and handcuffed together. Erecka's hair is tussled and blouse torn. Taser now lays broken on the floor.

ERECKA

Okay, everybody understand your ground rules?

MAE

Your ground --

BUNNY

your rules.

Mae and Bunny fold their arms angry in-sync pulling Erecka's arms out to either side. Erecka crosses her ankles and stares out looking crucified.

ERECKA

Look, ladies, both of you are miserable with your lives as is. If you give me half a chance, maybe, just maybe, we can all go through this Rabbit Hole together and come out a little less screwy.

Bunny and Mae *harrumph* sticking their noses in the air.

ERECKA

Bunny, if you could have a middle name, what would you choose?

BUNNY

Huh, what? Oh, uh, Rebecca.

MAE

Really? That's the name I wanted to give you.

BUNNY

I know. You tell me every time you get drunk!

ERECKA

Stop! Okay, so who named you Bunny?

BUNNY

Her daddy, one I don't remember.

MAE

You remembers, just don't want to.
You were too young when he died.

ERECKA

(mouth falls open)
Her grandfather, is dead?
(shakes head to clear)
So as it happens, I temporarily
have some pull at city hall. What
say we all go down this morning and
petition the Court for a name
change to --Rebecca?

Bunny is now called REBECCA.

REBECCA

Really think changing my name is
gonna' change me?

ERECKA

It's a start. --That and rehab.

MAE

Think you can change us both?

ERECKA

Nope, only you two can do that. All
I'm going to do is give you the
opportunity.

MAE

What happens after you leave?

ERECKA

Who said I'm leaving?

REBECCA

You, you're staying? I mean, mom
sure made it sound like you
weren't.

MAE

I never dreamed you'd be so --

ERECKA

What, caring? Well, here's a
careful reason I want you both in
rehab. You both need to be in a
safe secure location because I
believe you both --are in danger.

REBECCA

Don't know what Stemee was into, so
why me?

MAE

And why does I need to go in? He
was her ...?

ERECKA

Contingency conception.

MAE/REBECCA

Excuse us?

ERECKA

No excuse needed. Let's all get
some sleep. Gonna' be a busy day,
uh --today.

REBECCA

Gonna' unhook us?

ERECKA

Nope.

MAE

How we gonna' sleep?

ERECKA

Badly.

REBECCA

You don't trust --?

MAE

your own family?

Erecka *rattles* handcuffs, scoots down, and closes her eyes.

ERECKA

Who said, we was one?

INT. BECKLEY SHERIFF'S OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Erecka, still in her same suit that now looks like she's
homeless, opens her eyes.

Sheriff sits behind his desk watching Erecka who tosses the
file folder she was reading onto Sheriff's desk.

ERECKA

Want me to go first?

SHERIFF

Only if you stay there.

Erecka stands.

SHERIFF

Were only kiddin', g.d. it!

ERECKA

Foreplay.

Jane-Anne opens the door and Erecka scoots past her exiting.

JANE-ANNE

Where's she going in such a hurry?

SHERIFF

(picks up receiver)

Same place you're goin' --nowhere.

INT. FOREPLAY BAR - LATER THAT DAY

Bar is closed. Lights are off with chairs upside-down on tables and stools upside-down on top of the stage.

Key in lock turns, then front door opens. Erecka enters in jeans and work shirt with flashlight, then stops to listen.

Office light at end of the hall is on with *rustling* inside.

Erecka pulls up her right knee and unholsters an ankle-gun. She stalks to and announces from outside the office door.

ERECKA

Sheriff's Department! Lay on your stomach, arms out beside you, like you're an airplane!

MANAGER (O.S.)

Fuck You!

ERECKA

Wrong answer, scuz-ball. Five, four, three ...

MANAGER (O.S.)

Hold on there, Serpico! Sheriff said you was coming over.

ERECKA

Who are you?

MANAGER (O.S.)

The f'n Manager!

Erecka quick-peeks inside to see MANAGER, 30s, greasy hair, handlebar mustache, in a bowling shirt, holding a mop. A bucket of bloody water is next to him.

INT. FOREPLAY BACK OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Erecka enters office angry putting her weapon in a pocket.

ERECKA

What the fuck are you doing?!

Manager returns to mopping the floor.

MANAGER

Mopping up. Sheriff said I could open soon as you left.

ERECKA

But you can't disturb a crime scene before it's examined, moron!

MANAGER

Ain't disturb nuthin'! I'm moppin'.

ERECKA

Let's pray on it.

MANAGER

Oh shit, you one of them religious po-lice? Gun and a Cross, dangerous combination.

Erecka pulls out handcuffs.

MANAGER

Now hold on there, Andy Taylor! You ain't the sheriff, around here.

ERECKA

Citizen's Arrest, for tampering with evidence.

MANAGER

Ain't tampin' nuthin'! Just swooshin'.

Erecka *clicks* a handcuff onto Manager's wrist.

MANAGER

You can't do that, I got rights!

Erecka *clicks* other cuff onto Manager's free wrist.

ERECKA

You got the "rights" to sit down,
or be put down. Choose.

MANAGER

Make me.

Erecka knees Manager between his legs. He crumples in the torn leather easy-chair cupping his family jewels.

MANAGER

Mama.

ERECKA

Man oh man, that never gets old. --
Tell me everything you just did.

MANAGER

Make, me.

Erecka flicks open a spring-assist switchblade.

ERECKA

You have the right to remain gelded
--permanently.

Manager pulls his knees together protective.

MANAGER

Okay, okay, I'll spill! Ain't
gotta' threaten me, no ma'am. I
don't get paid enough for that. So
just ask. Go on, ask.

Erecka flips her knife closed, smiling.

INT. RALEIGH HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC WING - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

Modern but small hospital Visitor waiting area.

Erecka is sitting in a cluster of chairs drinking coffee.

Double secure-doors *beep* and auto-swing open.

Mae and Rebecca, in green patient-pants and blouse, are escorted out by ORDERLY, African-American male, 30s, a giant, in white pants and shirt with badge and a very deep voice.

ORDERLY

You want these two?

ERECKA
 (mimics his deep voice)
 Not really.

Orderly grabs Mae and Bunny's elbows. Both pull away. Erecka waves, *It's Okay*. Orderly releases, then gets coffee out of a machine. Mae and Bunny stand over Erecka with hands-on-hips.

BUNNY
 What's this about us bein', uh --?

MAE
 Constituted, voluntary-like?

ERECKA
 Committed. Committed Involuntary.
 Told you, I have pull.

BUNNY
 That why they sayin' we can't leave
 lessen you let us?!

ERECKA
 Called, Civil Commitment.

ORDERLY
 (*laughs* sipping coffee)
 They've been anything, but "civil."

ERECKA
 So why don't we start now?

Erecka pats both chairs on either side of her. Mae and Bunny each fold arms angry to *stomp* a foot. Erecka waves to Orderly who approaches. Mae and Bunny sit down fast beside Erecka.

MAE
 Coulda' said somethin' aforehand.

ERECKA
 Back atcha'.

Mae and Bunny look away in opposite directions in angry silence, then start scratching their arms.

Erecka asks Orderly about their medications.

ERECKA
 Antagonists?

ORDERLY
 Both are antagonistic. Rebecca is
 on daily Naltrexone and looks like
 a candidate for monthly Vivitrol.

ERECKA
And my sister?

ORDERLY
Just said?

Erecka points to Mae.

ORDERLY
Benzodiazepine during detox.

MAE
(sniffles)
Really gonna' leave us here to rot?

ERECKA
Rote. --Orderly, would you leave us
alone for a minute, please?

ORDERLY
(chugs coffee)
One minute.

Orderly throws empty cup, scans badge on door, and exits.

ERECKA
Need you both to write a list.

MAE
Don't like scribblin'.

ERECKA
Then speed-read. Might save your
life twice, and your daughter's.

REBECCA
Oh Steme, why'd you leave me?

ERECKA
Deputy Cocker was not murdered for
what he did. He was removed, for
what he wanted to.

REBECCA
What'd he wanna'?

ERECKA
To take you away.

MAE
From --?

ERECKA
The killer.

MAE
So why I's here?

ERECKA
You dated him.

REBECCA
Mom?!

MAE
I never went out with Stem!
(thinks hard)
Lap-dances don't count, right?

ERECKA
You both dated --his murderer.

Double-doors beep and swing open. Orderly enters.

ERECKA
Need your list by tomorrow.

Erecka stands and two-finger salutes Orderly, then exits.

REBECCA
Your sister's a real a-hole.

MAE
Hey, she's yours, too!

REBECCA
Only the stupid half!

Mae and Bunny scratch their arms. Orderly finger beckons them.

INT. FOREPLAY BAR - THAT EVENING

NEW DANCER, teen, anorexic, dances for Earlier Patrons.

Jeannie is dressed as before.

Erecka in jeans and cowboy shirt sits in a back corner booth watching everyone nursing a soda. Jeannie approaches.

JEANNIE
Stickin' with ginger-ale, ginga'?

ERECKA
For now.

JEANNIE
How're the girls?

ERECKA

Girlish.

JEANNIE

(laughs loud)

That sister of yours sure could get wild.

(no response, explains)

Oh, don't get me wrong, Mae could get out there too. But Bunny ...

ERECKA

Rebecca.

JEANNIE

Who?

ERECKA

Whom. Bunny is now legally, Rebecca.

JEANNIE

No shit? Anyway, she could hook a fish quicker than Cody Kemp, then keep them all danglin' on the same Poly Stringer for months.

ERECKA

Rebecca dated a lot of customers?

JEANNIE

"Lot?!" Hell, she dated every body! And I do mean every single swingin' schtick that had money, no joke.

ERECKA

Know what the fish said when it hit a cement wall?

(no response, answers)

Dam.

Erecka stands to put a twenty-dollar bill in Jeannie's hand.

JEANNIE

I get off at two.

ERECKA

"I get off," on catching bad guys.

JEANNIE

Anything I can do, just ask.

ERECKA

Which "fish" is a serial killer?

JEANNIE

Wait, wait, I know this one, uh, uh
--Jack The Kipper!

ERECKA

(turns to exit)
Any "Jacks" date both my girls?

JEANNIE

"Both?" Uh, hmmm, only one I can
think of, is the Owner.

ERECKA

(spins back)
"The owner" --
(points down)
of this club?

JEANNIE

Yeah, Jack Purdy.

ERECKA

"Purdy?!" As in, Sheriff Purdy?

JEANNIE

Brothers count, right?

Erecka slips another twenty-dollar bill into Jeannie's hand and exits down the hallway.

Jeannie puts both twenties in her bra smiling sexy.

JEANNIE

Always open, twenty-four seven!

INT. FOREPLAY BAR BACK OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Manager sits getting a lap-dance from Zadio. *Knock* on door.

MANAGER

Workin' here!

Door is *kicked-in* at its handle, police-style, by Erecka who points to Zadio.

ERECKA

Beat it --mom.

Zadio scurries out. Erecka *slams* door behind her angry and pushes over a bookcase. It falls sideways blocking the door.

ERECKA

Who gave you the order to wipe down
this office?!

MANAGER

(stands)

If you knows what's good you'll ...

ERECKA

I "knows" --your good Judge.

Manager reaches into a pocket. Erecka flat palms him hard in
his *Solar Plexus* knocking him back onto the couch *gagging*.

ERECKA

Which trumps your no-good Sheriff.
Who gave the order?!

MANAGER

Can't, breath.

ERECKA

Good thing I knows C, R, P.

Erecka straight-punches Manager's *Solar Plexus*. Manager *gasps*
more for air. Erecka reaches into Manager's pocket with his
handkerchief to pull out a snub-nose .38, then pockets it.

ERECKA

My next punch will break your
Xiphoid Process.

Manager stops gasping to look puzzled. Erecka explains.

ERECKA

Last part of a chicken to go over
the fence.

Manager's still confused. Erecka pulls back fist exasperated.

ERECKA

It's the tiny bone at the end of
your Sternum. Too much pressure,
and it can separate to puncture
your Diaphragm and that --
(fist *cracks* knuckles)
will be that.

Manager nods. Erecka pulls Manager up to standing, bends him
at waist, pulls him back upright, and repeats process, then
pushes Manager onto couch who can now finally inhale.

MANAGER

He'll Kill Me!

Erecka puts her opposite fist on Manager's sternum sarcastic.

ERECKA

Don't know what happened your
Honor? He wasn't breathing right,
so I had to keep doin' C, R, P.

Erecka reverse-punches fast stopping with her middle-knuckle
extended and just-touching Manager's sternum.

MANAGER

Owner told me!

ERECKA

Jack Purdy?

MANAGER

Other!

ERECKA

"Other?"

MANAGER

Brother.

Erecka yanks Manager up, then spins him to handcuff behind.

ERECKA

The Sheriff, told you, to corrupt
the crime scene?

MANAGER

If you mean he's corrupt, then yes
ma'am. So if you take me in, I'll
die in his jail.

ERECKA

Who said --you're going to jail?

Knock at front door. Erecka pushes Manager out the rear door.

INT. RALEIGH HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC WING - LATER THAT NIGHT

Hallway outside a *Personal Safety Room*. Erecka leans back on
the wall drinking machine's coffee. Footsteps echo. She
stands upright as NIGHT DOCTOR, 30s, Asian-American, in a
lab coat wearing glasses, comes around the hall's corner.

NIGHT DOCTOR

Hospital Administrator is not happy
about this.

ERECKA

Did he call the Judge?

NIGHT DOCTOR

Who wasn't happy either, but did authorize it for twenty-four hours.

ERECKA

That's all I need.

Pounding on the door's small window. Manager peers out.

MANAGER (MUFFLED)

You put me in a rubber room!

ERECKA

Bounce off the walls happy.

NIGHT DOCTOR

When he has to go to the bathroom?

ERECKA

Get a bedpan, urinal, and a case of water, please. I'll put them in, and then no one, and I mean no one, goes in or lets him out till I get back. Do you understand?

NIGHT DOCTOR

I understand, you're not treating me like a professional.

ERECKA

Snap your fingers.

Doctor stares. Erecka glares. Night Doctor *snaps* her fingers.

ERECKA

That's how long it takes for you to die in his world --professionally.

Doctor nods and exits. Manager flips *The Bird* in his window.

ERECKA

Hey, pull that crap on any hospital staff, and I'll break off more than your middle finger!

Erecka crushes her empty Styrofoam cup for Manager to see. Manager *laughs*. Erecka turns off the room's light switch.

MANAGER (MUFFLED)

No, no, anything but that, I'll be good!

Erecka turns light back on, then smiles as she exits.

ERECKA
Men are such babies.

EXT. RALEIGH HOSPITAL PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Large public parking lot, sparse lighting, lots of shadows.

Erecka exits hospital and walks to her rental car yawning. As she unlocks her door, a bag is pulled over her head. *Thunk*.

INT. KIDNAP CAR'S TRUNK - LATER THAT NIGHT

Dark, but light shines in through a crack in the back seat.

Erecka wakes with bag still over her head and both hands tied behind. She shakes the bag off, then listens as a cellphone *rings* and is answered by her unknown DRIVER whose voice is muffled so she can't identify.

Erecka pulls the floor-carpet back under her. Underneath is the car's spare-tire's plastic cover. She slides it over, feels for the Jack, then rubs her rope over its spiral-threads until rope breaks. Erecka reaches for ankle holster, but gone. She pats herself for her knife. It's gone, too. She pulls out jack-handle and pushes its beveled-edge end into the trunk's lock mechanism and turns it. Trunk unlocks and its spring-loaded hinges swing it up open. Erecka holds onto the jack-handle as she rolls up and out of the trunk.

EXT. ERECKA'S KIDNAP CAR IN THE WOODS - CONTINUOUS

As her weight exits the trunk, the car's rear-end rises.

Driver *slams* on the brakes causing the trunk's hood to fly back, bend at hinges, and *hit* the rear windshield cracking it. Driver backs up fast, so its tires throw dirt under it.

Erecka lies on dirt road, then stumbles into the adjoining woods, hears the car *slam* on its brakes, and a door open.

ERECKA
You lie, you die, darling.

Erecka runs through the trees. Branches cut her face.

A powerful flashlight beam sweeps through the trees.

Erecka falls flat holding the jack-handle as a weapon.

Footsteps search coming closer, stop, *mumble-curse*, then footsteps exit. Same car door *slams* and car drives away.

EXT. DIRT ROAD INTERSECTION WITH STATE ROAD - NOW MIDNIGHT

Erecka stumbles into a T-intersection exhausted. Her clothes are torn and covered with dirt. She sees headlights coming.

ERECKA

Fuck it.

Erecka waves her arms, loses balance, and falls on her knees.

Oncoming car's headlights illuminate her as car slams on its brakes, tires *squealing*, to a stop inches in front of Erecka.

Car door opens, footsteps. Erecka shades her eyes, can't see.

CABBIE (O.S.)

Needs a ride?

ERECKA

I gets deep discount.

Cabbie helps Erecka into passenger seat, then both drive off.

INT. CAB - MOMENTS LATER

Cabbie smokes her stogie. Erecka *coughs* fanning the air.

CABBIE

What'cha think of our town?

ERECKA

Helluva place.

CABBIE

Yep. But then again, where else you gonna' have this much fun?

Cabbie blows a smoke-ring. Erecka turns on car's radio. It is already playing *Three Dog Night's "Mama Told Me Not To Come."*

RADIO (FILTERED)

"That ain't the way to have fun,
no, uh-uh."

Song's *instrumental* follow-up plays.

Erecka *claps* her hands once, then sings along with radio.

RADIO/ERECKA

"Open up your window, let some air into this room. I think I'm almost chokin' from the smell of stale perfume. And that cigarette you're smokin', 'bout scarin' me half to death. Open up the window, sucko, let me catch my breath."

EXT. CAB IN WOODS - CONTINUOUS

Cab speeds down the road. Cabbie joins-in singing Chorus.

RADIO/ERECKA/CABBIE (O.S.)

"Mama told me not to come, Mama told me not to come, that ain't the way that it was, son, that ain't the way that it was, she said --."

Cab drives into the night to *Instrumental* and their *laughing*.

INT. RALEIGH HOSPITAL WING - EARLY THAT MORNING

Erecka walks down the hallway with face scratched, but now clean. Band-aids on one cheek and a bigger one on forehead.

Night Doctor walks to meet her.

NIGHT DOCTOR

Looked better.

ERECKA

Feeled better.

Erecka holds up and *rattles* a pill bottle, then pockets it.

ERECKA

How're the twins?

NIGHT DOCTOR

Rough night, but they'll make it. You're a good sister.

ERECKA

On-the-job training. How's our third patient?

NIGHT DOCTOR

Quiet. Haven't checked on him in awhile.

Night Doctor exits around a corner. Erecka follows her.

INT. RALEIGH HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC WING - CONTINUOUS

Erecka and Night Doctor enter around the corner. Erecka sees the padded room's interior light is off through its window.

ERECKA

"Quiet" --with the light off?!

NIGHT DOCTOR

Don't know who could have --?

Erecka flips wall-switch on and sees blood on the inside of its window. She pushes Night Doctor against the wall singing more of *Three Dog Night*.

ERECKA

"This is the craziest party there could ever be, don't turn on the light, 'cause I don't wanna see."

Night Doctor slips her card into the door's Reader.

Door lock *beeps* and releases. Erecka enters cautious.

INT. MANAGER'S PADDED ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Manager is dead on the floor with his throat slit. Erecka checks his neck pulse. Night Doctor enters and *gasps*. Blood is sprayed over all the padded-walls. Erecka points to it.

ERECKA

Arterial spray from his Carotid.
Whoever did this, wanted to send a messy message. Call Security.

Night Doctor is motionless in shock. Erecka pushes her out.

INT. RALEIGH HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC WING HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Erecka's tired, frustrated, and fed-up.

ERECKA

God damn this town! No, wait, already did.
(recovers a professional)
Lock the door, and no one, No One, goes in except me! Got it this time?

Night Doctor nods admonished. Erecka storms away.

ERECKA

Post Security on the door, then get me your visitor check-in log and the surveillance videos!

NIGHT DOCTOR

Uhhhh --?

ERECKA

(stops to slow turn)
Of course you don't. Tell your Administrator she'll be getting a call from the Judge in the morning about initiating all three.

NIGHT DOCTOR

Where will you be?

Erecka punches a wall as she exits around the corner singing more "Three Dog Night."

ERECKA

"I seen so many things, I ain't never seen before. Don't know what it is, don't wanna see no more!"

Her footsteps *echo* away angry. Her reckoning is coming.

INT. SHERIFF'S BEDROOM - NOW DAWN

Small bedroom. Sheriff is asleep *snoring* in double-bed alone. His front doorbell *rings* repeatedly. Sheriff snort-awakes.

SHERIFF

Don't stop, I'm almost --?!

Doorbell *dings* more. Sheriff wakes up.

SHERIFF

God damn --*so close*.

Sheriff puts on a robe and exits barefoot *curse-mumbling*.

INT. SHERIFF'S FOYER - MOMENTS LATER

Sheriff descends stairs yawning and scratching, then sees flames flickering through his front door's window-glass.

SHERIFF

What the --?

Sheriff flips door's deadbolt-lock and yanks door open.

EXT. SHERIFF'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Sheriff exits house to see a paper bag burning on his stoop. He stomps on the bag putting out the fire, then lifts his same foot looking at it. It's covered with dog excrement.

SHERIFF

What the shit?

Racking of a shotgun makes Sheriff look for it.

ERECKA

Exactly.

Erecka is hip-aiming a police-issue *Remington 4-shot Pump*.

SHERIFF

Best not be suggestin' anything!

ERECKA

(imitates Sheriff)

"Ouuueee! I don't never suggest, I orders."

Erecka *snaps* her fingers.

Jane-Anne steps out of the shadows aiming her .38 revolver.

JANE-ANNE

Sir, would you please put your hands behind your back, palms together, like you're praying?

SHERIFF

You all is the ones that need to start prayin'! When I gets out --

ERECKA

If you get out, I'll be waiting.

SHERIFF

Cain't be serious?

ERECKA

Been "serious" most of my life, then I came to your town.

(rests shotgun on hip)

She-it, now I be laughin' all the fuckin' time.

Jane-Anne cuffs the Sheriff behind.

SHERIFF

What's the Charge?

ERECKA

Charges. Assault, kidnapping,
murder --times two.

SHERIFF

Fuck you city-girl, only one here I
wants ta' kill --is you!

ERECKA

Missed your chance earlier, bubba.

SHERIFF

What, when?! Ain't left my house
since come home from work?

Erecka points to driveway. His Cruiser's trunk is bent
backwards with rear window cracked. It's the kidnap car.

Erecka tosses earlier jack-handle at Sheriff's feet.

ERECKA

Might need that where you're going.
(to Jane-Anne)
"Book 'em, Danno."

JANE-ANNE

Who the what?

ERECKA

Take Sherri-baby to jail and stay
with him. I'll be in later.

JANE-ANNE

How you getting back?

Cab pulls up. Cabbie exits smoking another stogie.

Erecka motions for Jane-Anne to open her hand. She does.
Erecka drops six bullets in it, then walks to Cabbie.

Jane-Anne opens her revolver's chamber. It has no bullets.

ERECKA

(over her shoulder)
Had to be sure!
(to Cabbie)
Got another stink-stick?

Erecka points at Cabbie's cigar. Cabbie tosses her a new one.

Erecka bites its tip off and wets its wrapping with her lips.

CABBIE
Thought you didn't smoke?

ERECKA
Don't. --Did.

Cabbie hands Erecka his lit cigar who uses it to light her's.

ERECKA
If you can't join 'em --

She hands back Cabbie's cigar, puffs, and blows a smoke-ring.

ERECKA
beat 'em to death.

Erecka gets in front seat. Cabbie gets in. They drive away.

SHERIFF
Who that bitch think she be?

JANE-ANNE
She don't "think," she knows. She's
the new sheriff in town, bitchette.

Jane-Anne herds Sheriff to her Cruiser with her elbow in his back while reloading her gun.

EXT. DIRT AND STATE ROAD INTERSECTION - LATER THAT NIGHT

Cab approaches an intersection and turns onto a dirt road.

INT. CAB ON DIRT ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Cabbie and Erecka smoke their cigars. Cabbie fans her air.
Erecka blows interlocking smoke-rings, then squints ahead.

ERECKA
Got the impression I was being
taken to meet the Boss's boss.

CABBIE
If'n you wants to throw a body in
the river, makes no sense doin' it
down here bein' we're so close to
Fayetteville.

ERECKA
New River Gorge Bridge?

CABBIE

Right up the bend, almost a mile long. Lot of folk jump off it.

ERECKA

Bungee-jumpers?

CABBIE

Once a year for sport. Rest of the time, it's noggin-nosedivers.

ERECKA

Then what's down here?

CABBIE

Nothin'. Road dead-ends.

EXT. END OF SAME DIRT ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Road ends in a dirt cul-de-sac. Cab stops. Erecka then Cabbie exit. Cabbie sings *Billy Preston*.

CABBIE

"Nuthin' from nuthin' leaves nuthin'."

Erecka examines a chain across an overgrown side road-path now speaking, not singing, Cabbie's same song's lyrics.

ERECKA

"Gotta have somethin'? --If you wanna be with me."

A rusted sign hanging from the middle of the same chain reads "No Trespassing." Erecka kneels to feel the grass, it's been flattened. She points down the overgrown road.

CABBIE

Old Forrest Service trail with a Fire Tower down there till it burned. Government abandoned both decades ago.

ERECKA

"Decades," huh? Then why is the grass flattened and why a new lock?

Erecka points to a shiny padlock at end of chain. She stands to kick at its post. It's solid. She walks to other post and kicks it. It moves. She kicks twice harder and it *breaks* off at the ground. She throws it and chain over to other side.

ERECKA

Shall we?

Erecka waves a twenty dollar bill in front of Cabbie who grabs it, then opens back passenger door and bows.

CABBIE

"We" shall.

Both get in to drive down the road's trail.

ERECKA

Need a receipt this time --times two.

EXT. CAB ON THE ROADTRAIL - MOMENTS LATER

Cab bounces slowly down the rough road.

ERECKA (O.S.)

Stop, turn off the engine --Now!

Cab stops. Its engine *quits*.

INT. CAB ON OVERGROWN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Cabbie inhales on her cigar. Its red-ash lights her face.

CABBIE

What now, Columbo-ess?

Erecka inhales on own cigar and it lights her face, then she imitates the famous TV-detective as she exits.

ERECKA

"Uhh, just one more thing."

EXT. CAB ON OVERGROWN ROAD - CONTINUOUS

Erecka stands think-smoking. Cabbie exits *slamming* her door.

ERECKA

Shhhhhh!

CABBIE

Who you shushin'?

ERECKA

Shut up and listen.

Both listen to hear electrical *humming*.

CABBIE

'Lectrified fencin'? Way out here?

Erecka points up to a tree. Cabbie looks up.

Mounted high on the tree is a huge vintage video camera aimed down at the road ahead of them.

ERECKA

Closed circuit television, old-school. Few more feet, and we'd have been in somebody's sights.

CABBIE

Who don't take kindly to company.

Erecka takes Cabbie's cigar and stomps on them both.

CABBIE

Hey, that cost seventy-seven cents!

ERECKA

Twenty-nine in bulk. Got a cell, Rockefeller?

CABBIE

Ain't smart enough for a smart phone. What now, Obi Wan-nabee?

ERECKA

Don't phone home, E.D. --just wait.

Cabbie tries to object, but Erecka hands her another \$20.

ERECKA

Engine and lights off, no smoking, its red ash can be seen for miles.

CABBIE

*(stuffs \$20 with others)
Okay, but my meter's runnin'.*

Erecka reaches in cab's back seat to remove the shotgun.

ERECKA

You packin'?

CABBIE

Lady, this be West Virginny. Even our critters is armed.

Cabbie reaches in front seat to retrieve with both hands her heavy .50 caliber *Smith-Wesson 500*.

ERECKA

Well hell, one critter sure is.

Erecka hikes off into the woods with the shotgun.

CABBIE

Where you goin'?

ERECKA

*To dance --
(racks shotgun)
with the Devil.*

EXT. SOUTHERN MANSION-TYPE ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

Haunted mansion with columns overgrown by ivy. High stone perimeter walls have a wrought-iron closed-and-locked gate with same vintage camera mounted above one column of gate.

Erecka jog-enters outside the fencing and kneels.

ERECKA

Nosferatu's summer home.

Erecka sees a Sheriff's Cruiser parked inside.

ERECKA

I fuckin' hate dirty cops.

Erecka looks around, sees something, then exits backwards.

Moment, then a dead tree *cracks* and falls against the support column so the top of the tree smashes gate's security camera.

EXT. MANSION FRONT DOORS - MOMENTS LATER

Its entrance double-doors are ornate and tall.

One side opens and Deputy One, in uniform, exits looking in.

DEPUTY ONE

Locked up?

He gets a non-verbal answer, nods, and goes to front gate.

EXT. MANSION GATE - CONTINUOUS

Deputy One sees the fallen tree and *keys* his hand-held radio.

DEPUTY ONE

A snag took it out. Boss Man's gonna' have to buy a new one. I'll knock the tree over. Open the gate.

Gate *electronically* opens. Deputy One exits and knocks the fallen tree down outside of fencing, then hears a whisper.

ERECKA

Timberrrrr.

Deputy One spins drawing. Erecka swings a dead branch hitting him full in the face splintering her branch. Deputy One dead-falls flat on his back. Erecka stuffs Deputy One's tie into his mouth, turns him over, and handcuffs him behind. Erecka slides Deputy One's revolver in her belt, then frisks him to find her own gun in its ankle-holster and straps it back on. She rolls Deputy One over, then takes his radio.

ERECKA

*Were you my driver, dead-head?
(hits his head with gun)
I'd kick the shit out of you --*

Erecka throws leaves over-top Deputy One and enters the gate.

ERECKA

but then there'd be nothing left.

EXT. MANSION FRONT DOORS - MOMENTS LATER

Door opens. Deputy Two exits in uniform *keying* his radio.

DEPUTY TWO

Where you be, Beavis?

Radio *keys* on, but its voice is garbled unintelligible.

RADIO (FILTERED)

???

DEPUTY TWO

(keys radio again)
Say again, butthead?

Radio *keys* on, but voice is garbled worse.

RADIO (FILTERED)

????

Deputy Two keys his radio on angry.

DEPUTY TWO

Why you always play stupid games?
This ain't funny!

Deputy Two turns as Erecka rams her shotgun's butt into his nose. Deputy Two cups his nose with hands and bends over. Erecka swings shotgun's barrel on the back of Deputy Two's head to a loud *crack* who flat-falls into a funny position.

ERECKA

No, but this is.

Erecka secures Deputy Two same as Deputy One, then hits him on the forehead, hard. Erecka puts One and Two's revolvers in her left and right pant-pockets. She stands feet wide-apart.

ERECKA

Now this critter --

Erecka walks past Deputy Two side-kicking dirt over him.

ERECKA

is really packin'.

INT. MANSION - MOMENTS LATER

High foyer with a curved staircase and antique furniture.

Erecka enters the front door and wrinkles her nose.

ERECKA

Smells like a nursing home.

Erecka senses she is being watched and spin-turns to see same type video camera above the door looking down at her. She vogues for the camera, then smashes it with shotgun's butt.

ERECKA

Fuckin' candid camera.

TWO DOGS begin *barking* and running down the staircase.

Erecka takes a vase of fresh flowers on half-table and throws its water-contents on floor in front of her. Two Dogs charge her *snarling*. Erecka opens front door wider. Two Dogs try to stop, but slide past her on watery-flowers to the outside. She *slams* the door behind them, then looks up the staircase.

ERECKA

I'm tired, cranky, and really
pissed off! Do not make me come up
there, a-hole!

Only response are the Two Dogs *barking* and snapping outside.

ERECKA

Olly oxen free, or I burn this
place down and make you come to me!

No response. Erecka walks over to a lit silver candelabra on a matching half-round table across from the vase's table.

ERECKA

Tiiiiimberrrrrrrr --.

Erecka slowly lays the candles down against its wall drape. The cloth begins to burn rising. Erecka steps back smiling.

ERECKA

Knock, Knock! Who's there?! Nero!
Nero who?! I'm gonna get Near, You!

Two Dogs *bark* louder outside. Erecka *fires* shotgun at the empty vase on the table *exploding* it. Two Dogs *yipe* away.

Erecka reloads her shotgun from pocket walking up the stairs.

ERECKA

Best make your peace with your
Maker, 'cause this peacemaker --
(*racks* shotgun)
is comin' for ya'!

INT. MANSION UPSTAIRS BEDROOMS - MOMENTS LATER

Large hallway with open bedroom doors except at the far end.

Erecka systematically slices her way around each open door to quickly step inside and visually clear the room. She then proceeds to next doorway closing each door behind her. She completes all proper police-procedure for *Room Clearing* then stands outside last closed door with her back against a wall.

ERECKA

Sheriff's Department!

No response. Erecka turns a knob. Locked. She steps back.

ERECKA

Come Out --with your hands up!

Revolver bullets *fire* inside shattering double-door's wood.

Erecka steps-up and quick-rack *fires* her shotgun at all four door hinges. Their wood *explodes*. She steps back re-loading.

ERECKA

That was fun! Let's do it again!

Revolver bullets *fire* inside shattering door's center wood.

OLD MAN (O.S.)

Fuck you!

ERECKA

(*racks* shotgun)

Kiss me first!

Erecka repeats door-breach *firing* at four hinges, steps back.

Creaking, then door falls past Erecka, *boom*, onto floor.

She drops the shotgun and pulls out one service revolver.

ERECKA

Hands above your head, now!

Clicking of an empty gun trying to fire inside the room.

Erecka assumes *Weapon-Retention Ready-to-Defend Position* with one arm up at 45° and commits. She enters the room fast.

INT. MANSION MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Huge room made into a hospital ward with antique hospital bed and modern medical equipment. Antique desk is in its center.

OLD MAN, 70s, Caucasian, sits in a wheelchair with I.V. bag tubes going into his neck's hydra-port. Their monitors *beep*.

ERECKA

Hands, hands!

An antique revolver falls out of Old Man's hands onto floor.

ERECKA

Do not move, Do Not Move!

Erecka covers the Old Man and kicks his gun away, then steps back covering Old Man two-handed as she scans the room.

ERECKA

Central Line, antibiotics, and opioid pain killers show you're on your way out. So why do it?

Old Man smiles leering and wetting his lips.

OLD MAN

She'd do anyone or anything for enough money. Why chew on hamburger when you can suck on prime rib?

ERECKA

That is beyond a gross metaphor. Just like you. So you murdered Stem out of petty jealousy, huh?

OLD MAN

You're slower than a snake in mud during winter. No, dummy. He was killed because he wasn't good enough --for her.

ERECKA

Heard he was a good cop though.

OLD MAN

(weak-laughs, rack-coughs)
"Good?!" Hell, good enough for me to own, just like the rest.
(spits phlegm)
'Cept that dumb-ass Sheriff.

ERECKA

Then why'd he kidnap me?

DEPUTY TWO (O.S.)

Sum-bitch so dumb --

Erecka spins. Deputy Two, dried blood down his face from head-wound, stands in doorway looking demonic, aiming a shotgun.

DEPUTY TWO

could aim at the ground and miss.
(motions with shotgun)
Hand Boss-Man your gun, easy-like.

Erecka tosses her single pistol to Old Man.

ERECKA

You, were my driver. Should have known you'd buy cheap cuffs.

DEPUTY TWO

Uh-uh, keeps a cuff-key in my back pocket, just in case.

OLD MAN

"Just in case?!" You already set a world record for bein' in your own cuffs.

DEPUTY TWO

Ha, ha --don't quit your day job.
(now serious)
Both dogs run oft. I put out the
fire downstairs.

ERECKA

That shotgun yours --or mine?

Deputy Two *fires* his shotgun near Erecka *exploding* a monitor.

DEPUTY TWO

(*racks* shotgun)
Your's was empty, fuzz-ster.

Erecka slides a hand nonchalant into her second gun's pocket.

DEPUTY TWO

My next shot --
(takes careful aim)
guarantees a closed coffin.

A bullet *fires* hitting Deputy Two between his eyes who dead-falls backwards out onto the fallen doors.

Erecka spins to a knee aiming her second gun at Old Man.

ERECKA

Why?!

OLD MAN

Because he wasn't good enough --
(drops Erecka's first gun)
for you.
(*spits* at Deputy Two)
Plus the ass-wipe shot my heart
monitor. Know how much these things
cost?

ERECKA

Hope you're attorney goes for an
insanity plea, because you got some
bat-shit batty reasoning.

OLD MAN

Funny, never thought I'd ever say
this, but --I'm proud of you.

ERECKA

Knock off that shit!

OLD MAN

You really don't know who I be?

Erecka stares at him deer-in-headlights, then *relief-laughs*.

ERECKA

Good one. almost had me going there
--pops.

OLD MAN

Papa.

Erecka stands nonplussed, then *laugh-snorts* repeatedly.

ERECKA

Get the fuck out.

OLD MAN

No, you did --when Alice took you.

ERECKA

(eyes go to slits)
How do you know --my mother's name?

Old Man stares. Erecka changes gun-hand and makes a fist.

ERECKA

Feeling a lil' peckish, old fart?
Need a lil' C, R, P, do ya'?

Old Man head-motions to his desk.

Erecka scans to see a framed-picture. Her jaw then fist drop.

The black-and-white framed picture is of ALICE, African-American, 30 and a YOUNG MAE, 15. Between them is, YOUNG ERECKA, 10, wearing a police officer Halloween costume.

OLD MAN

You always wanted to be a cop, so
it were a Kodak moment.

ERECKA

(stumbles back like shot)
No?! Mae said he, dad, you, whoever
the fuck, died shortly after --?

OLD MAN

Now that --did cost a lot.

ERECKA

Fuck off! I'm supposed to believe
you faked your death to live like a
hermit hiding out here for forty
years running this town in secret?

OLD MAN

Forty very prosperous years.
(pats his hospital bed)
Got the mattress lumps to prove it.

Erecka fast-shoots a monitor, then another, *exploding* them.

ERECKA

This is like some bad movie.

OLD MAN

Deal with it, offspring. And stop
shootin' up my god damn equipment!

Erecka *shoots* last monitor then turns over equipment berserk.

ERECKA

I'm not --your god, damn, kid!

Old Man's hand tremors as he pulls out a folded yellowed
piece of paper, then offers it to her.

Erecka yanks it away and unfolds. It's her *Birth Certificate*.
Erecka drops her gun, then the paper, and backs up confused.

OLD MAN

Go back home, little girl. Let your
old man die in peace.

ERECKA

"Peace?!" Abused sister, incestuous
half-sister, my father's a god damn
criminal mastermind --
(grabs head in pain)
somebody just shoot me!

OLD MAN

Toss me your gun.

ERECKA

And my sisters?

OLD MAN

What the fuck you care? You never
knew 'em, so won't miss 'em. Go on
back to your big city life, that's
--my gift.

ERECKA

"Gift?!" Gift? Like the "gift" you
kept giving Mae all those years?

Erecka kicks and *breaks* more things breathing like a bull.

OLD MAN

You need to leave now, or ...

ERECKA

"Or" what?! You'll have me killed?
Your own ...

OLD MAN

Calm down, sissy, this just be
business.

ERECKA

"Business?!" Oh my God! No, wait,
God left town, real sudden-like.
(loses it *crazy-laughing*)
You're the reason this place is
Hell On Earth! You --are the Devil.

OLD MAN

You got a lotta' inheritance and a
lotta' perks comin', if'n you wants
to come in from your blue cold --?

ERECKA

What I "wants" is for you to --

Erecka lunges at him squeezing her hands around his throat.

ERECKA

DIE, SISTA-FUCKA!

Old Man kicks Erecka in a shin knocking her back as he rolls
backwards in his wheelchair.

His rear wheel knocks over a full trashcan. Used tissues fall
out against an antique portable floor-heater whose heating-
elements glow red.

Old Man tries to roll his wheelchair away from it, but both
wheels slip on his snot-papers.

OLD MAN

Give your old man a hand --
daughter.

Erecka is frozen, then sees the heater, and *claps* animated.

OLD MAN

Whatcha' doin'?

ERECKA

Rooting for justice.

A tissue *flames*. Old Man sees it and gets a panicked-look.

OLD MAN

Stop funnin' me, girly-girl. I
ain't ready yet!

ERECKA

Then bests get ready, "boy-boy!"
(knocks on desktop)
The Grim Reaper's a-knockin', and I
do believe, he's a-smilin'.

A second tissue catches *fire*, then a third.

ERECKA

Now, he's downright guffawin'.

Old Man holds out a hand and beckons with a crooked-smile.

OLD MAN

Join me, together we can rule --

ERECKA

(steps back appalled)
Fuck Me! This is a bad movie!

Erecka shakes a fist at Old Man imitating *Darth Vader*.

ERECKA

"I --am your father."
(spits at Old Man)
Know how many scum bags I arrested
like you in my career?
(collapses in a chair)
Too many. Who knew what a fucking
Shakespearian tragedy you penned?

More tissues burn as those still in trashcan *flash-ignite*.

Old Man is frantic and tries to roll away, but his perspiring
hands slip on the wheels.

OLD MAN

This ain't how I supposed to end!

ERECKA

(shrugs shoulders)
Don't know, just got here.

OLD MAN

Then get with the g.d. program!
Give me my picture and let me go
out holding onto my memories.

Erecka stands in a trance and reaches for the framed picture.

A gun-hammer *clicks* being pulled back. Erecka drops to floor.

A bullet *fires* splintering the desk next to her. She spins.

Old Man aims a single-shot antique derringer while fumbling in a sweater pocket for another round.

ERECKA

One shot, no kill. My turn.

Erecka kicks the derringer out of Old Man's hand, then grabs a bottle of 90% isopropyl rubbing alcohol next to syringes and spins off its cap. She *cracks* her neck.

ERECKA

So what do you do with --a Devil?

Erecka pours alcohol over Old Man's head, then drops bottle.

ERECKA

"Return to Sender" sounds about right.

The alcohol burns Old Man's eyes as he rubs them with arthritis gnarled knuckles.

OLD MAN

Have pity on a old man!

Erecka picks up both her handguns, opens the cylinder of one, dumps its shells into a palm, then puts one live round back into the chamber and spins it. She tosses the rest of bullets away, then pitches single-shot gun into Old Man's lap.

ERECKA

Just did.

Erecka punches the picture frame's glass breaking it, then tosses it into Old Man's lap and kicks her Birth Certificate into the fire. The Certificate bursts into flames, then its fire creeps up Old Man's alcohol-soaked legs.

Erecka goes to exit when she hears Old Man's gun-hammer *click* back. She stops and talks with her back to Old Man.

ERECKA

They say being burned alive is the worst way to go. Choose well, old man, you only have one choice left. Make it the right one for once.

Old Man's gun *fires*. Erecka drops. She's okay, and turns.

Old Man is engulfed in flames spasming. Room is on fire.

Erecka stands to spit at Old Man, then exits after dropping her second service revolver near Deputy Two.

ERECKA

This is one secret, that will stay private.

EXT. MANSION DOOR - MOMENTS LATER

Erecka exits house. Fire inside *explodes-out* front windows knocking her down. She stands and dusts-off, then realizes the Cruiser is now gone. She runs to the open front gate.

EXT. MANSION GATE - CONTINUOUS

Erecka exits gate and searches by the fence. Deputy One is gone, too.

ERECKA

Had an extra key in your back pocket, too, dumb-nuts?

Cabbie's fifty-caliber round fires *booming* through the woods.

Erecka runs down the road to it's echo.

EXT. MANSION'S OVERGROWN ROAD - MOMENTS LATER

Earlier Cruiser is parked with lights on. Cab is now gone.

Erecka runs out of the woods, bends winded, then recovers.

ERECKA

Cabbie?

No response. Erecka scans to see Cabbie laying in the brush.

ERECKA

Cabbie!

Erecka runs to turn over Cabbie who *groans*.

ERECKA

Who shot you?

CABBIE

(pushes Erecka away)

Me! --God damn cannon knocked me six ways to Sunday. I'm gettin' me a twenty-two!

Cabbie sits up pissed then glares at Erecka.

CABBIE
Coulda' told me he was dirty.

ERECKA
Who, Deputy Dawg?

Erecka extends a hand to help Cabbie stand.

CABBIE
He drove up yelling for me to move it or lose it, so I politely told him to fuck-off. Sum-bitch pulled a knife. Well, you know what I said, and boom, I'm flying back-asswards.

ERECKA
He's got a fifteen minute head-start, let's expedite!

CABBIE
Easy Ramjet, he had to back out. Plus, I ain't filled her up. And the way he was drivin', she'll burn fuel like soup thru a sieve.

Erecka gets in Cruiser's driver-seat. Cabbie gets in its passenger front seat.

INT. DEPUTY ONE'S CRUISER - CONTINUOUS

Erecka looks for, but can't find a key.

Cabbie flick-opens a heavy *Buck* hunting knife.

CABBIE
Move over, moron.

Erecka grabs Cabbie's knife, breaks off ignition's casing, jams blade into its ignition, turns knife. Cruiser *starts*.

CABBIE
Done this before, I sees.

ERECKA
Once or thrice.

Erecka stomps on gas pedal. Cabbie looks back at the fire.

CABBIE
Should we call in the fireguys?

ERECKA

No point. That Devil --is finally going home.

INT. THEIR CRUISER AT INTERSECTION - MOMENTS LATER

Cruiser stops at earlier intersection of dirt and state road.

ERECKA

Which way?!

CABBIE

Don't think he's going to no homecoming.

ERECKA

The bridge!

CABBIE

Hope he don't jump, least not till we gets there.

(grabs radio mike)

Call it in now?

ERECKA

Not yet! Beside Jane-Anne's by herself. It's just us old ladies.

CABBIE

Speak for yourself, girlfriend.

Cabbie slides over her .50 caliber to Erecka.

CABBIE

Take this, windy-talker. Just don't shoot Bessie.

Erecka turns Cruiser onto main road and stomps on gas pedal.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF INTERSECTION - CONTINUOUS

Cruiser fishtails as its tires throw dirt, then speeds up.

ERECKA

Who's Bessie?

(no response)

Oh, your cab, got it.

CABBIE

Bet you weren't Academy Class President.

ERECKA

Actually --.

EXT. NEW RIVER GORGE BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Erecka and Cabbie, both in Cruiser, approach the bridge.

CABBIE

There she blows!

Her cab sits on the side of the road just before the bridge with its hood up and steam rising from its radiator.

Cruiser parks behind Cab. Cabbie, and Erecka now with the .50 cal, exit.

Cabbie runs to her cab, checks it, then pats it lovingly.

Erecka shades her eyes squinting to look down bridge's span.

ERECKA

Don't see him. He can't have crossed a mile on foot by now?

CABBIE

Catwalk.

ERECKA

What, where?

CABBIE

(points to side)

Under! Take the tourist path.

Erecka runs to opposite side of road by edge of bridge. There is a gravel path leading down. Cabbie points downriver.

CABBIE

Oueeee, lookee.

Erecka looks. Old Man's mansion has fired surrounding forest.

ERECKA

Now call it in, show them the way.

CABBIE

What about you?

ERECKA

I don't plan on jumping --yet. Go!

Cabbie jumps in Cruiser and starts it with her knife.

CABBIE

Always wanted to do this.

Cruiser's *siren* and red lights come on, then it fishtails a U-turn burning rubber to disappear up the road.

CABBIE

Yeeehaaaaaaa --!

Erecka exits down the pathway shaking her head.

ERECKA

Bet your first name is Junior.

EXT. UNDER THE NEW RIVER GORGE BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Erecka steps from gravel path onto a perpendicular crosswalk under the bridge. She walks to the main crosswalk that runs parallel under middle of entire bridge. This *Skywalk* is two feet wide and open on both sides with only a cable handrail.

ERECKA

Who the fuck designed this?

Erecka looks straight down 876 feet to the white water below.

ERECKA

Dam.

Erecka scans down the narrow open catwalk to see Deputy One resting winded at its mid-way point. Erecka cups both hands around her mouth yelling.

ERECKA

Tag, you're it!

Deputy One sees her and *fires* six rounds. His bullets ricochet off girders far away from Erecka who yells back.

ERECKA

You bridge huntin'?!

Deputy One starts jogging away on the catwalk.

ERECKA

Sent Cabbie to the far end, told her to sit down before firing at you this time!

Deputy One slows, stops, then sits down.

ERECKA

*What the --?**(cups hands again)**Might as well come back!**(no response)**Glad I ain't a scaredy-cat --*

Erecka slow-walks on the narrow catwalk watching her feet.

ERECKA

much. This'll take forever.

Erecka sees a safety double-cable runs above the catwalk. She pulls off her belt, loops it over the cables, then slides it along as she walks at regular pace eagle-watching Deputy One.

EXT. CENTER OF CATWALK UNDER THE BRIDGE - MOMENTS LATER

Erecka stops fifty feet from Deputy One.

ERECKA

Quite a view. Shame to spoil it.

Deputy One fast-draw aims at Erecka.

DEPUTY ONE

Drew you in close like a decoy.

Deputy One stands and straight-arm aims his gun at Erecka.

DEPUTY ONE

Say good-bye, asshole.

ERECKA

You can't count, assholette.

Deputy One pulls trigger to only an empty *click*, then begins to reload from his duty-belt.

Erecka two-handed aims the .50 caliber at Deputy One's chest.

ERECKA

Think on it, son.

DEPUTY ONE

Ain't your god damn kin!

ERECKA

Never know in this god damn town.

Deputy One looks downriver at the raging forest fire.

DEPUTY ONE

Closest thing I ever had to a
father --was him.

(back to fumble-loading)

Till you made me a orphan again!

ERECKA

Neither of us had a real father.
That old man died years ago, then
hid out from his own judgement day.

DEPUTY ONE

Everything was going just fine till
your fat ass got here!

Erecka frowns and tries to look behind at her own butt.

ERECKA

He played you --just like he did
everyone else. Until you, became
part of his problem.

Deputy One finishes loading and *spins* his chamber.

DEPUTY ONE

Killed Stem for him, you know.

ERECKA

I know. So this one's --on you.

Erecka takes straight-arm dead-aims at Deputy One's head.

ERECKA

But you can change all that. Right
here, right now.

Deputy One looks at mansion-fire then cocks hammer, *click*.

Erecka cocks her gun's huge hammer back to louder, *Click*.

ERECKA

No one can cheat Death, son. It's
got no Tell.

DEPUTY ONE

(studies own gun)

Could try and shoot my way out.

Erecka two-handed aims police-style sliding a foot back.

ERECKA

Being dead, is heavier then
carrying a casket.

DEPUTY ONE
First thing you said makes sense.

Deputy One releases his hammer and holsters revolver.

ERECKA
(releases her hammer)
There ya' go.

DEPUTY ONE
Second thing you said, makes even
more sense.

Deputy One jumps over the railing. His scream fades.

DEPUTY ONE
Fuck Yuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuuu --!

Erecka looks over the hand-rail, steps back cautious, sticks gun into back waist-band, then stares at forest fire raging.

ERECKA
I'd make a joke, but ain't nuthin'
funny.

Erecka exits back on catwalk sliding belt along its cable.

INT. JUDGE'S CHAMBER - LATE THAT DAY

Ornate office with oak desk and law-book filled bookshelves.

Erecka sits dressed same, dirty, hair messy, something no cat would drag in.

Judge enters in a three-piece suit holding a file-folder.

JUDGE
You can't make this shit up.

ERECKA
Who'd want to? Can I go, please?

JUDGE
Where?

ERECKA
Home.

JUDGE
Thought you'd make a joke first.

ERECKA
You first.

JUDGE

This town needs a new Sheriff.

ERECKA

(as *Jack Nicholson*)

"This town needs an enema!"

(stands)

The one you got ain't dumb enough,
so now you wanna' import stupid.

JUDGE

Watch your mouth.

ERECKA

Why, where's it going?

JUDGE

Into hot water.

ERECKA

Sounds good.

Erecka opens door to leave with a Vaudeville Bit.

ERECKA

"Shave n' a haircut --
(*stomps* foot twice)
two bits!"

Erecka exits pulling the door closed behind her.

JUDGE

I know who the Old Man was!

Door opens and Erecka re-enters to fall into same chair.

ERECKA

Good, because I don't.

JUDGE

Took me a long time, a lot of
pieces to put together. But when I
finally solved his puzzle, I knew
my own life was in danger.

ERECKA

(bolts upright in chair)

You --you convinced Mae to call me!

JUDGE

After she mentioned you, I did some
digging. I figured you'd bird-dog
him if I could get you up here.

ERECKA

Does Mae know?

JUDGE

(shakes head)

Just me --now you.

ERECKA

So there's still one secret left in
this hell hole.

JUDGE

Always will be, if --.

Judge opens his desk's top drawer to retrieve something.

JUDGE

I gave our ex-Sheriff a choice.
Resign, or face corruption charges.

Judge tosses the Sheriff's badge to Erecka who doesn't move,
so badge hits her in chest to fall into her lap.

JUDGE

Town Council took away his house.
He moved in with his brother. He's
Foreplay's new manager.

Erecka shakes her head looking through window behind Judge.

JUDGE

His house comes with the job. It's
got three bedrooms. Guess what, you
got two gals to help you clean up.
Then "they" got you to help them
clean up. Rebuild your family, and
this town's Sheriff Department.
Win, win, for everyone.

ERECKA

From Hell to Purgatory, just like
that, huh?

(picks up badge staring at)

I'm betting, the other town leaders
couldn't find a candidate, so you
came up with this cockamamie plan.

No response. Erecka looks at Judge who's staring at ceiling.

ERECKA

I pick and train my own officers.

Judge snaps forward in his chair. They're negotiating.

JUDGE

Done.

ERECKA

We get state-of-the-art new equipment and training.

JUDGE

Well, don't know if ...?

Erecka moves to toss the badge back.

JUDGE

Done!

ERECKA

My department, so my rules, with no interference from the Mayor, Town Council --or you.

Judge nods.

ERECKA

Especially when I go after Foreplay. And I don't wear a uniform, except at civil ceremonies.

Judge nods again.

ERECKA

Last, and deal kicker, no one ever learns about --the Old Man.

JUDGE

Done.

Erecka squeezes the badge in her fist and stands.

ERECKA

Then we're done-done.

Judge stands and offers hand. They shake.

JUDGE

Beckley thanks you.

ERECKA

Looking back on it now, pretty sure, it's the other way around.

Erecka exits. Judge pumps an arm, then dances in place singing a vintage TV comedy-show humorous lyric.

JUDGE

"Here come da' judge, Here come da'
judge, Everybody look out, 'cause
here come Da' Judge!"

Judge's intercom *crackles* on. His SECRETARY speaks.

SECRETARY (FILTERED)

Your wife's on one.

Judge sits serious straightening his tie.

SECRETARY (FILTERED)

Should I tell her --
(flat delivery)
"Here come da' judge?"

Judge stares at his intercom.

INT. RALEIGH HOSPITAL PSYCHIATRIC WING - THAT EVENING

Erecka sits in the *Visitor Waiting* area wearing a new suit drinking coffee. She's clean with her hair beauty-parlored.

Secure-doors *beep*, then swing open. Mae and Rebecca enter.

Erecka puts down her coffee and stands.

Mae and Rebecca run to Erecka smothering her with kisses.

Erecka makes an ewww-face trying to hold her "mutts" away.

Orderly enters carrying a newspaper.

ORDERLY

Evening --Sheriff.

ERECKA

What'd the Judge do, send e-mails?

Orderly snap-opens his *Beckley Herald Special Edition*. Its Headline reads "New Sheriff in Town!" Picture underneath it is Erecka's less-then-flattering jail-arrest *Mug Shot*.

Mae and Rebecca see it, *squeal*, then smother Erecka with hugs. Erecka looks at Orderly and acquiesces.

ERECKA

West Virginia. Almost heaven --

Mae and Rebecca lay their heads on Erecka's opposite shoulders. Erecka looks at one, then the other, and *sighs*.

ERECKA

almost.

FADE OUT.

CAPTION: *New River Gorge Bridge in West Virginia is one of the longest and highest steel-arch bridges in the world.*