

COLD CITY

**written and directed by
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**REVISED
JAN./'10**

EXT. SOME L.A. STREET - PRE-DAWN

Bilge sky. Christmas lights. Trash blows. Siren wail. Whores trawl. Bums loll. TB cough. Neon smear. Thunder rolls.

--SUPERIMPOSE--

L.A. / '69

INT. THE MACHO LIZARD - MORNING

Cop bar way down Sunset. Two MEN/a back booth:

ELMER FRINT (60s); an LAPD Chief of Detectives badge and a .38 Colt Police positive ride his hip.

DWIGHT MUELLER (58); shakes/the sweats --he fumbles open a new bottle of Romilar CF cough syrup.

DWIGHT

How many dead?

ELMER

Officially just the first one.

DWIGHT

Unofficially?

ELMER

Nine.

DWIGHT

Man who loves his work.

ELMER

Maybe his mother told him: "If you can't do something right, don't do it at all."

DWIGHT

May-be.

Dwight has a long pull of Romilar; stifles a Codeine belch.

ELMER

You should take it easy with that stuff.

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DWIGHT

It's my Wheaties.

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Elmer slides a POLAROID of a YOUNG WOMAN across the table.

ELMER

Only vic to see our guy and walk away.

DWIGHT

Who took this?

ELMER

Stands to reason our guy did.
Found at the scene. Beside body #9.

DWIGHT

Got yourself an eyeball wit.

ELMER

If we could find her. She hasn't come forward.

DWIGHT

She don't wanna be body #10.

ELMER

Guy 'signs' each of the scenes.

DWIGHT

Lemme guess --Helter Skelter?

ELMER

Legion Gringo. That name mean anything to you?

DWIGHT

Sounds like a spic gang tag. R&I?

ELMER

And the moniker file --no hits.

DWIGHT

Talk about the women.

ELMER

All nine had priors, solicitation--

DWIGHT

Nobody misses a few cut whores.

ELMER

Hey: They all matter--

DWIGHT
--or none of them do.
(beat)
How old are they?

ELMER
Were they, you mean.

DWIGHT
Don't fucken' tell me what I *mean*,
old shoe.

ELMER
Ages twelve through forty-one.

DWIGHT
Nine dead whores is big ink. Why
no press?

ELMER
We've been bribing the wits at the
scenes.

DWIGHT
Borrowed fucken' time.

ELMER
Added to which the public eye's
fixed on the Tate slayings.
Manson's antics are a useful
diversion.

DWIGHT
Mr. Gringo makes Manson look like
righteous cat shit.

ELMER
Our city fathers know another
madman amuck would not bode well
for the upcoming elections. Our
constituents could lose faith.
Heads could roll.

DWIGHT
Sounds like nine already have.

ELMER
We sluiced the Benevolent Fund.
There's a bounty. It's fat.

DWIGHT
How fat?

ELMER
Arbuckle.

Elmer slides a cash-tamped envelope across the table.

DWIGHT
Skip to 'why me?'

ELMER
I could get a nigger to do it for
half that.

DWIGHT
So go get a nigger.

ELMER
You rut in the sewers--

DWIGHT
--where you rut, old shoe?

ELMER
--which gives you homefield
advantage on this psycho.

DWIGHT
Why won't I just Geronimo the down
payment?

ELMER
Because I'll violate your ex-wife.

DWIGHT
On what?

ELMER
With her priors? Take your pick.

DWIGHT
Fuck her, fuck you.

ELMER
Hard-charger just like the old
days?

DWIGHT
Last of the motherfucken' Mohicans.

ELMER
Taking the money is what you do;
taking this job is what you are.

DWIGHT

Yeah?

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ELMER

You had potential. I saw myself in you.

DWIGHT

If I wanted you to suck my cock,
I'd a brought peanut butter.

ELMER

This is a chance. To exist again.
And just maybe even it up.

DWIGHT

With who?

ELMER

With *Jane*.

Dwight slumps back in his seat, fingers the wad of bills.

ELMER (CONT'D)

We traded in our tickets to normal
a long time ago, Dwight.

DWIGHT

And for what?

ELMER

The worst of people and people at
their worst. To crucify our own
families just to make a promise to
everyone else's: We will stand for
your dead.

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(beat)

So I'm asking: Will you stand for
these dead?

DWIGHT

...get me the murder book?

Elmer nods, straightens his bow-tie; stands to leave.

ELMER

You have three days on this. If
you fail, you forfeit your advance
and there's more pieces of dead
girls.

(off Polaroid)

Find the one that got away --you'll
find Legion Gringo.

DWIGHT
An' when he's found?

ELMER
Come on, you know.

DWIGHT
I wanna hear you say it, old shoe.

ELMER
Kill him.

DWIGHT
Yeah, then?

ELMER
Then? Happy New Year.

DWIGHT
An' may old acquaintance be fucken' forgot.

OVER BLACK; --SUPERIMPOSE--

MON. / DEC. 29

INT. VOLKSWAGEN (TRAVELING) - DAY

Dwight drives slums. 93KHJ radio news: Vietnam/first draft lottery since WWII. Altamont reverb/Sonny Barger rants.

Dwight pops BENZEDRINE tablets/chugs a ROMILAR chaser.

EXT. CRAFTSMAN HOUSE (WILLOWBROOK) - DAY

Dwight curbs the VW, gets out; walks around to the back of a ramshackle house. Black families on porches cold-eye him.

EXT. CRAFTSMAN HOUSE BACKYARD - CONTINUOUS

Weeds/mustard plants. Chickens ricochet Dwight's legs coming from a coop. Dwight ducks inside the coop.

INT. CHICKEN COOP - CONTINUOUS

AGENT ORANGE (22), skinny black dude in camouflage; a stutter, nerve damage; reading *A Taste of Power*; drinking Scotch & milk from a jelly jar.

DWIGHT
What the know, youngblood?

AGENT ORANGE
Samey-same, but looky here--

He displays a jar of severed human ears.

AGENT ORANGE (CONT'D)
Genuine Victor Charlie souven-ear.
Ninety-nine cent a piece, buck a
half a pair--

DWIGHT
Put those away, you fucken' flake.

AGENT ORANGE
Careful how you address you
veterans, now.

DWIGHT
You ran horse outta Laos in your
semper fi's rectums.

AGENT ORANGE
Bein' in country got a way what
fuckin' with a man's better angels.
Since I been back, I been gettin'
right with Jesus.

DWIGHT
Fuck Jesus --get right with *me*. I
need a piece.

AGENT ORANGE
What the action gonna come my way?

DWIGHT
Ten for makin' intros. I get what
I need, that's times two.

AGENT ORANGE
How I know you ain't woofin'?

Dwight rips a twenty dollar bill in half. Slaps half in
Orange's palm.

DWIGHT
'cause I'm your daddy, Twitch.

Orange stamps his foot on the floor. Footsteps coming up. A
trap-door swings up, reveals:

LERMONT "BUNCHY" CLEMMONS (40s), big black dude in a beret/bandolier combo. He slow-burns Dwight.

BUNCHY
This motherfucker smells like fuzz.

DWIGHT
Alls I smell is chickenshit.

Bunchy/Dwight stare-down. Orange diffuses:

AGENT ORANGE
Naw, see Dwight's ex-fuzz. Yeah, like, he hate the Pigs same as us or worse than. He cool.

BUNCHY
That right, homeboy? You cool?

DWIGHT
As Charlie Parker's pillow.

INT. UNDERGROUND CHAMBER - DAY

Bunchy leads Dwight downstairs: BLACK PANTHERS, trading short-wave communiqües with other cells; oiling sub-machine guns; a Patty Hearst type practices a clenched-fist salute.

DWIGHT
Ever think a changin' your name to the Black Gophers?

BUNCHY
This usta be a still --applejack and bathtub gin. Can't be too careful with the infrared on the ghetto-birds...

Panthers screening *Battle of Algiers* on a bed-sheet/taking notes. They eye-fuck Dwight as he passes the projector.

BUNCHY
...but this cave-jive is for the fuckin' Flintstones.

A banquet table. Bunchy/Dwight plop into bamboo throne chairs.

DWIGHT

Stay subterranean. Metro's been talkin' up a joint Cointelpro infiltration. They gotta hard-on for you.

BUNCHY

So: You are sympathetic to the struggle of the Afro-American Marxist-Leninist Vanguard?

DWIGHT

No, I just hate those LAPD cunts like the Feds hate commie niggers.

BUNCHY

You talk some dirty dozens for a white pebble in the toe of the black man's boot.

DWIGHT

An' I think your grits and gripes bullshit is a shuck-and-jive to lasso white cooze and color TVs.

(beat; grins)

That don't mean I can't make a donation.

Bunchy cracks them Schaefer's tallboys. They toast/guzzle.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

I need some firepower.
Untraceable. Lots of bite.

Bunchy displays a .12 gauge Model 37 Ithaca pump shotgun.

BUNCHY

Special Forces currently employin'
this sucker in the Big Muddy.
Turns the gooks into Hamburger Helper.

DWIGHT

Lay it on me.

BUNCHY

Baby got *beaucoup* bark AND bite.

DWIGHT

Sold.

BUNCHY

If you're in the market for a hand-cannon, thisz a real nigger-knocker-downer.

Bunchy displays a Colt .45 1911. Dwight nods approval.

DWIGHT

Shells for both, what's the damage?

BUNCHY

Five centuries.

(Dwight skims c-notes)

Call my ass curious, but who's so bad as to require such hardware?

DWIGHT

Legion Gringo.

BUNCHY

What'd he do? Fuck your sister's cat?

DWIGHT

He's chopping up whores.

DE FREEZE

If you ain't LAPD no more and none of these ladies is your kin, how come it's you takin' on this bad man single-hand?

DWIGHT

They paid me.

BUNCHY

Naw, Jack, that's the excuse. I'm seekin' the reason.

Dwight jams the Colt in his waistband; his gut juts.

DWIGHT

Because I'm the garbage man.

EXT. CRAFTSMAN HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Dwight walks back to the VW. Trunk-dumps the Ithaca. Parked there: an UNMARKED LAPD F-CAR, two plainclothes standing there giving him the fisheye:

WALT KOHNER (50s), booze-fucked face, linebacker frame, eyes sunk way back in his face like shit pellets in pudding.

FRED MELBA (30s), glasses, sprinter's frame, a boyish grin that makes him look a ways off from buying his first beer.

WALT
Whattya say, junkie?

DWIGHT
I say your wife fucked The Four Tops.

WALT
Ya filthy fuckin' hype--

Fred buttonholes Walt.

FRED
Mr. Mueller, hiya. Fred Melba, outta Central. I understand if you're rankled at the surveillance.

DWIGHT
"Surveillance?" You guys're as subtle as a goat shittin soup cans.

WALT
You Smothers brother motherfucker. Whatcha doin' in Darktown? Coppin' junk from your jigaboo pals?

DWIGHT
Tadin' box scores on your old lady.

Walt's hand drops to his .38/Dwight's hand to his .45.

FRED
No.

His voice like a slice cord; he stops the senior men cold.

FRED
I'm telling you --both of you-- *sub rosa* or not, this is a homicide investigation and will be conducted with the attendant conduct. We all want the same thing: Legion Gringo, cold on the slab, posthaste.

DWIGHT
You talk like a faggot lawyer and alls I'm in this for is the money.

WALT
Not for Jane?

Dwight turns away, hawks/spits, turns back;

DWIGHT
I don't need no baby-sitters,
choirboy.

WALT
My mother's ass --only thing ya can
trust with a junkie is that ya
can't trust a junkie.

FRED
Chief Frint was specific to this
point: You're too unpredictable to
be let off the short leash.

DWIGHT
(grabs his crotch)
Leash this.

WALT
Some dumb fucks thought you got a
raw deal on that fuckin Jane
situation. But ya know what?

DWIGHT
You don't tell me, I might pee my
pants.

WALT
I thought you got what every
dogdick junkie, badge or no badge
deserves: A kick in the scrotes
and a one-way gutter bounce.
(beat)

Thing is though, I'm startin' to
think the kick didn't take...and
you're about due for a sequel.

DWIGHT
So throw some hands, Frankenstein.

Dwight/Walt stare-down;

FRED
When he does the next one, and the
one after that, and on and on,
we're going to ask ourselves: Did
we endeavor all due diligence to
stop him? Yes or No?
(MORE)

FRED (cont'd)

(beat)

Right now --you live with your answer?

Dwight breaks off the stare;

DWIGHT

The people I gotta go through to find this freak are gonna fly, fucken' *posthaste*, if they see you two nosebleeds up my ass. So choirboy, you just consider every station house smear you heard on me to be a fucken' *mash* note and stay outta my way 'til Gringo's juked.

Fred pushes his glasses up the sweat-slick of his nose.

FRED

Noted.

Dwight walks back, gets in his VW/peels out. Fred/Walt dive in the F-CAR/peel out in pursuit.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN (TRAVELING) - DAY

Dwight eye-flicks the rearview. F-CAR on his tail. He passes a NORM'S DINER, SEES:

TWO L.A. COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPUTIES swaggering into Norm's. Both DEPUTIES BLACK GUYS. Dwight jerks the wheel--

EXT. NORM'S (PARKING LOT) - NEXT

--VW ka-thunks into the lot. Dwight parks; engine running, he hustles into the diner.

INT. NORM'S - NEXT

Dwight makes the DEPUTIES at a back booth. Their name tags read: JACE & WOMACK (both 30s).

DWIGHT

Officers, officers--

WOMACK

Everything all right today, sir?

JACE

Y'look a little *bothered*--

DWIGHT

These two guys, with guns...

WOMACK

Slow, jist slow down and tell it.

DWIGHT

...they (I'm sorry), they got guns,
they're talking crazy, like that
they wanna kill all the Pigs. And
they said the only thing worse than
Pigs was...Blood Sausage.

JACE

Blood Sausage?

DWIGHT

Their words, officers.

WOMACK

Blood Sausage meanin' what?

DWIGHT

I think Blood Sausage means Negro
policemen.

Out the window: Fred skids the F-Car into the lot.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)

That's them.

Deputies swap looks. They stand up, hands on holsters.

JACE

Step back, sir please--

WOMACK

Blood Sausage?

Fred/Walt hustle in the front door.

WALT

Back off, we're--

Walt reaches a tad too fast for his badge. Deputies draw
their pistols. Diners freak/flip/flee.

JACE

Grab the floor, paddy--

WALT

Fuck you abba-dabba, we're cops.

WOMACK

What you *are* is one second away
from doin' the Funky Chicken--

FRED

We're LAPD, we're Homicide.

Dwight bolts out the rear exit, hops in the idling VW.

WALT

We're runnin' a tail on that guy
you dumb County fucks--

JACE

Ho! You wanna talk some *County*
smack?

Deputies prone out Walt/Fred. Fred watches Dwight gun the VW
out of the Norm's lot. He grins like in spite of himself.

WOMACK

Now let's talk about Blood Sausage.

WALT

What the *fuck* is Blood Sausage?

EXT. THE GLITTER DOME - AFTERNOON

Dwight ducks inside this busted-ass strip club in Lynwood.

INT. THE GLITTER DOME - NEXT

On the bar TV: Manson chicks at Hall of Justice; Squeaky Fromme: "Watch your children, Judgement Day is coming!"

Dwight snags a rear table. A B-GIRL ambush-vamps him.

B-GIRL

You wanna drink, hey, or some
action?

DWIGHT

When's Vicky Lind come on?

B-GIRL

I give way better suck than her,
hey, ask anybody.

She licks her lips. Dwight sees the rainbow rubber bands on
her braces.

DWIGHT
Just, when's she on?

B-GIRL
Now, hey...

House lights dim. A LOUNGE BAND kicks up *Goin Out of My Head*. A violet pin-spot picks up a WOMAN center stage:

VICKY LIND (48) in rank rhinestones; she sings. Her voice is drug store vodka:

VICKY
Well I think I'm goin' out of my
head / yes / I think I'm goin' out
of my head / over you, over you...

Dwight pops Bennies, a pull of Romilar; the shit hits him; Vicky's a pulsing violet angel in slow-mo.

VICKY (CONT'D)
...out of my head over you / out of
my head day and night / night and
day and night / wrong or right...

A couple of SHRINERS in fezzes lech off Vicky:

SHRINER 1
Break her open like a shotgun...

SHRINER 2
...fuck her till her nose bleeds.

Dwight goes over; he shoves the Shriners; Vicky sings through the scuffle. A BOUNCER wades in; shoves Dwight; Dwight trips and falters.

BOUNCER
Get the fuck out or sit the fuck
down. Where you think you at?

Dwight goes back to his table, sits.

VICKY (CONT'D)
I must think of a way into your
heart / there's no reason why my
being shy should keep us apart...

Vicky starts to strip. Patrons hump their fists. Dwight looks away.

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INT. THE GLITTER DOME (DRESSING ROOM) - NEXT

Backstage; Dwight knocks at a dressing room door.

VICKY (O.S.)
Come on, yeah--

Dwight opens up. Vicky, smoking. She looks him up/down.

VICKY (CONT'D)
Well, goddamn then.

DWIGHT
It's important. You know I
wouldn't come if it wasn't.

VICKY
Been some kinda while.

DWIGHT
Eight years that feel like a
thousand.

VICKY
Sit down, stick around?

Dwight clears soiled gowns off a ratty cot/sits.

VICKY (CONT'D)
I saw you out there.
(beat)
You're lucky they didn't kick your
ass and/or call the cops.

DWIGHT
Guess they ain't too particular
about their clientele.

VICKY
Were you defending my honor?

DWIGHT
You look the same.
(beat)
Good, I mean.

VICKY
Gravity's a bitch...but thanks for
saying that.
(beat)
You've got this look in your eye.

DWIGHT
What kinda look?

VICKY
Look like you used to get; like
you're sitting on something big.

DWIGHT
Workin' a case.

VICKY
That's cop talk.

DWIGHT
My former brethren. Jack the
Ripper's gone Hollywood, they
kicked over my rock.

VICKY
So what's to it?

DWIGHT
I got nothin'. I got he calls
himself Legion Gringo...that name
mean anything to you?

VICKY
No, but I hear things. Whispers,
y'know? He's got the street trade
scared bad.

DWIGHT
But they'll keep workin'.

VICKY
We all gotta eat.

DWIGHT
Elmer threatened to bust you to get
me playin' ball on this. I want
you to split until I disappear
Gringo, so they can't use you to
screw me on money owed. Just for a
week or so, just for careful...

Dwight skims c-notes from his bounty cash roll.

VICKY
What is this? Some kinda half-ass
penance?

DWIGHT

This is one thousand dollars and me asking nice.

VICKY

You're not worried about them using me to wedge you. You think this he might come after me.

DWIGHT

I just--

VICKY

He's a *whore-killer*, Dwight. Is that what you think of me? That I am? I'm a singer, didn't you see me up there...I'm a *singer*.

DWIGHT

It would be a comfort for me to have you out of this guy's orbit.

VICKY

He scares you. He reminds you of what happened. Of *her*--

DWIGHT

Please, don't--

VICKY

--of *Jane*.

DWIGHT

This bastard's done nine already; he's in it for the blood and goin' for the world's record and yeah, I am scared --scared fucken' shitless I can't stop him and that more a these girls are gonna die bad. And nobody cares, not the pogues, not the press --ain't like they're Quality Victims, right? You know what they say: They're only whores, they're only whores and deep down in their rat's nest hearts they think these whores had it comin'. That you live by the Street you goddamn die by it. So they look away.

(MORE)

DWIGHT (cont'd)
Until it's *their* wives gettin'
chest-popped at the autopsy or
their daughters gettin' dumpstered
like human garbage and *then* they
wanna see blood. *Then* they wanna
know WHY...

VICKY
Still know how to talk your way
into a woman's heart.

He proffers the money. This time she takes it.

VICKY (CONT'D)
You sure you can afford this?

DWIGHT
There's more when he's dead.

VICKY
Not the money. You do this thing,
you might not come all the way out
this time. Or is that the way you
want it?

DWIGHT
I just know thisz the way it's
gotta be.

VICKY
You always loved them more than me.

DWIGHT
Not more. Different.

VICKY
But I was *alive*, Dwight, I was
alive and right there and I waited.
For you to love me, to let me in,
and then to come back. I waited,
and longer than I want to tell,
'cause you'd think I was some kinda
sucker.

DWIGHT
I could never think that.

VICKY
And here you are and all these
years and it took more dead girls
to bring you through my door.

He grabs her/she grabs back; their hands all over. She tears
her shift; he trips out of his pants; she pulls him in;

he holds her back; they come together and fall down together in the dark.

INT. THE GLITTER DOME (DRESSING ROOM) - NEXT

After. Dwight, dressing. Vicky, smoking.

VICKY

Your eyes still do that thing.

DWIGHT

My eyes.

VICKY

After you come, they get even more green.

(beat)

How will I know it's safe to come back?

DWIGHT

Call me at the hotel, before.

VICKY

If I can't get you?

DWIGHT

Stay gone.

He stands to leave; she touches his hand.

VICKY

Dwight? When you find him, when you find him and kill him and after...if you need something to bring you back, back from that dark place, I want you to think of me. Loving you. And waiting.

(beat)

Will you do that?

He leans over. He so gently kisses her forehead;

DWIGHT

I always did, Victoria Lind.

EXT. MARLOWE HOTEL (DOWNTOWN) - EVENING

Dwight curbs the VW by a back alley, gets out, Ithaca over his shoulder, walks around front to the lobby of his hotel.

INT. MARLOWE HOTEL (LOBBY) - NEXT

Dwight sees: WALT, lounging upside the tenant mailboxes, the LAPD LEGION GRINGO MURDER BOOK in one pot-roast fist.

DWIGHT

Where's the choirboy?

WALT

Went for coffee.

Walt kicks Dwight in the balls; Dwight drops.

WALT (CONT'D)

Ya get your rocks off makin' me
look stupid in front a those porch
monkeys?

DWIGHT

They'll be Tootsie Rollin' your
wife tonight--

Walt kicks Dwight's face. Dwight curls up and shuts up.

WALT

News flash, Flash: You are gonna
find Gringo and *stand down*. I
cancel his ticket, I reap the
ataboys, I collect the bounty.
You try'n shake me again, I will
fuck your ass up so bad God *Himself*
will look away.

Walt steps on Dwight's neck; Walt flashes his .38.

WALT

Now you sound off we're clear or
I'll paint this fuckin' foyer with
your brains and claim justifiable.

DWIGHT

--clear.

WALT

Address me as "sir," pukepot.

DWIGHT

--clear, sir.

Walt drops the murder book in a heap on Dwight.

WALT

And clean up. You look like a fuckin' dog's breakfast.

INT. MARLOWE HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Dwight at a TV table in just his shorts, bruised up from Walt's beat-down. He chugs Romilar. A western on KTLA. He studies the murder book.

Body dump pix/morgue glossies. "Legion Gringo" fingered in blood on crime scene walls and on victim's corpses.

The Polaroid of The One That Got Away, staring back at him. He traces the blur of her shoulder with his finger.

DWIGHT

Stay alive?

He crushes Bennies. He uses the Polaroid to cut them into little lines of powder. He snorts them.

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OVER BLACK; --SUPERIMPOSE--

TUES. / DEC. 30

INT. MARLOWE HOTEL ROOM - PRE-DAWN

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Dwight passed out on the floor. He jerks awake; he's on his back, his heart hay-wires; he sucks for breath and tries to find his hands and knees.

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INT. MARLOWE HOTEL ROOM (TOILET) - DAWN

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Dwight barely braces himself on the wall and tries to urinate.

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INT. MARLOWE HOTEL (KITCHENETTE) - NEXT

Dwight --showered/dressed-- lays the Ithaca in a Vendome Flowers box.

Outside, the sky looks like a bruise.

INT. MARLOWE HOTEL (HALLWAY) - MORNING

Dwight, flower box tucked under one arm, knocks on a neighbor's door.

BELLAMY (61), in mystery-stained Fruit of the Looms opens up the door, yawning.

BELLAMY

This better be good. I was fuck-dreaming Mary Poppins and she tasted like Peppermint Schnapps.

INT. MARLOWE HOTEL (LOBBY) - MORNING

Bellamy exits the lobby; walks up to the F-CAR; Fred/Walt on all-night stake-out. They glance at Bellamy/they glance away bored.

Bellamy pulls out his dick/pisses on the F-CAR. Fred/Walt jump out, chase him down the sidewalk. Dwight jolts out of the lobby in the opposite direction.

EXT. MARLOWE HOTEL - NEXT

Dwight comes around the corner. Fred's there --leaning against the VW, grinning his grin.

FRED

Mr. Mueller, I gotta say --you're the least disappointing legend I've ever met.

DWIGHT

So what we just stand here like two French fags in a French film?

FRED

All the same, I'd rather not. All the same, I'd rather get started.

DWIGHT

Started what?

FRED

Legion Gringo.

DWIGHT

Kohner already thinks he's gettin the bounty--

FRED

I couldn't care less about the money.

DWIGHT
So what then choirboy?

FRED
Funny thing? I *was* a choirboy.
And an altar boy. Seminary school
with the Jesuits. But, see, I
couldn't spend my life behind a
pulpit in a turned-up collar. God
didn't want another delegate. So I
became a policeman. And I came to
believe that between Good and Evil,
just maybe, lies Justice.

(beat)
A case like this. A killer like
this. That's my Holy Grail.

DWIGHT
What about your partner?

FRED
Kohner's washed up and dirty as the
inside of a goat.

DWIGHT
And your spiel on me?

FRED
You're a functioning narcotics
addict; you're erratic, unsound,
and feared on the streets. And you
think if you can't save these
girls, you don't deserve to live
yourself.

(beat)
I'll bet everything on you.

DWIGHT
Don't think you know me --that
would be a mistake.

FRED
Then Kohner and I stay on you like
a tin-can tail. Gringo slips
through the cracks and more girls
take a ride on the pale horse--

Dwight snaps/jumps. Fred kicks out his legs, jams a finger
in his carotid, gets his .38 In Dwight's face.

DWIGHT
How many men you shot weren't a
paper?

FRED
You'd be the first.

DWIGHT
Your mother's cunt.

FRED
I think we cherish the same thing
above all: Innocence.

DWIGHT
Fuck you, Nancy Drew.

FRED
We hate the same thing above all:
Those who defile it.

DWIGHT
I just want the money.

FRED
What about Jane?

Fred steps back. Dwight forces himself standing. *

DWIGHT
What d'you know about it? *

FRED
Just Kohner's side. You wanna give
me yours? *

DWIGHT
What makes you think you got the
big enough balls to run this down? *

FRED
I looked to my faith. *

DWIGHT
Jesus fucken' Christ. *

FRED
I'd appreciate it if you didn't
take his name in vain.

DWIGHT
You roll with me, it's the boonies,
the bad bush. We follow my play-
book. It won't be pretty and it
won't be Hoyle. We bury Legion
Gringo for all time. We go until
End-of-watch.

Fred puts out his hand;

FRED
End-of-watch.

Dwight turns away; rubs feeling back into his throat; hocks up phlegm. Fred grins/pushes his glasses up his nose.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN (TRAVELING) --PROCESS SHOT-- - DAY

Dwight drives; Fred sticks the Polaroid of The One That Got Away in a dash vent as they spitball:

FRED
Department braced every pimp in
L.A. existence. None of them
claimed the girl as their own and
all had solid alibis at the times
of the murders.

DWIGHT
This doesn't vibe pimp snuff. Our
guy's some rogue motherfucker.

FRED
You're thinkin' maybe, what? A
john?

DWIGHT
He does the first one, gets away
clean, now he's got a taste for it.

FRED
Escalates into a functional frenzy
killer who leaves no prints, no
trace-evidence of any kind.

DWIGHT
Gainfully employed. Place of
residence. A trap-door spider.

FRED
I think he lives between the
screams.
(beat; off Polaroid)
You considered she may have
skipped?

DWIGHT
She's here.

FRED
Tell me why.

DWIGHT
It's in her eyes.

FRED
Windows of the soul?

DWIGHT
Fuck that jazz, Shakespeare --she
was stoned when this was took.

Fred looks close at the Polaroid. He sees her dope-eyes.

FRED
You're right.

DWIGHT
She'll hole up, stay close to her
connection.

FRED
Could the connection be our guy?

DWIGHT
A dealer might waste a whore to
make a point, but times nine is
just bad business.

FRED
Gringo targets prostitutes
exclusive. We should work the pimp
angle.

DWIGHT
Le Van Kim.

FRED
Little early for Chinese, innit?

DWIGHT
It's Vietnamese. Kim is a pimping
motherfucker Number One.

FRED
He's not in the Vice file.

DWIGHT
Wipe your ass with that file --it'd
be more use.

*
*
*

FRED

Okay, then: What's his MO?

DWIGHT

His "talent scouts" rope girls soon as they hit town. Kim provides 'em with room and board, gets 'em dependent on his hospitality. Then he breaks 'em in with bed artistry. Then it's fuck-a-thons with high-line clients. Dyke shit; animal shit; anything goes.

FRED

Jesus wept.

DWIGHT

Hell sucks.

EXT. HANOI HILTON - DAY

Dwight/Fred at the gate of Kim's Bel Air estate. Fred pushes a buzzer. A VIETNAMESE-ACCENTED VOICE answers.

VOICE (O.S.)

Who that?

FRED

We're with the Los Angeles Police Department. We'd like to speak to Mr. Kim, if we could.

VOICE (O.S.)

You dinky-dau. You buzz off.

Dwight pushes past Fred. LEANS on the buzzer.

VOICE (O.S.)

Who that?

DWIGHT

The voice of America, motherfucker, now open says-a-me.

VOICE (O.S.)

You got warrant?

DWIGHT

Tell Kim it's Dwight Mueller, he'll open up most ricky-tick.

VOICE (O.S.)

You wait.

FRED

If this guy's so untouchable who
put you on him?

DWIGHT

While back, one of Kim's guys
snagged some DA's niece, runaway.
She was of age, not bein' held
against her will, no legal way to
get her back.

FRED

So?

DWIGHT

So I got her back.

FRED

And?

DWIGHT

And Kim said if I ever came back
here he'd give me a Saigon Sex
Change.

FRED

(beat)

What's a Saigon Sex Change?

Before Dwight can answer: Main Gate grinds back. Reveals:
A half-dozen VIETNAMESE BODYGUARDS, black PJs, AK-47s.

BODYGUARD

Mr. Kim say come on in.

EXT. HANOI HILTON - DAY

Bodyguards march Dwight/Fred across lush/sprawling grounds.
Frangipani blossoms flutter down.

FRED

Who is this guy?

DWIGHT

Made his stones in Cholon, ran a
crew with the Binh Xuyen mob,
duking it out with French Intel for
control of the poppy Fields.

(MORE)

DWIGHT (cont'd)
 When shit boiled over Number Ten he
 traded 'Nam for Hollyweird and dope
 for the big boom-boom.

They dodge koi ponds and Kama Sutra fuck-tableau topiary.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
 Keep your head on a swivel now --
 this is Indian Country.

*
 *
 *

Garden fuck-party in progress. Our host: LE VAN KIM (57),
 sipping Pernod. His voice is lilting/musical/French.

LE VAN KIM
 Gentlemen. A tantalizing diversion
 from what promised to be a most
 dreary afternoon.

A Victrola cranks Edith Piaf. A HAREM OF YOUNG GIRLS hover--
 all-American chicks in gauzy scant threads.

DWIGHT
 I dig what you've done with the
 place, Kim. Mucho classy --for a
 fuck pad.

LE VAN KIM
 Monsieur Mueller, you remain just
 as amusing in the flesh as I had
 you captured in memory.

DWIGHT
 It's nice to be remembered

LE VAN KIM
 How could I forget? The young lady
 you relieved from my stable was
 quite popular with my patrons.
 Losing her was cause for great woe,
 to both my heart and my purse.

DWIGHT
 (off the Harem)
 Looks like you're over her.

LE VAN KIM
 Time heals all wounds.

DWIGHT
 Except for the fatal ones.

LE VAN KIM
 To be sure.

FRED

We're looking for a girl.

LE VAN KIM

Then we are fortuitous-met,
Monsieur...?

FRED

It's Sergeant.

LE VAN KIM

I had hoped yours was a social
calling.

FRED

The girl is an eyeball witness to a
string of murders.

Dwight flashes Kim the Polaroid.

DWIGHT

One a yours?

LE VAN KIM

Mon dieu --has she come to harm?

FRED

The killer knows he can't leave her
alive.

DWIGHT

He gets to her first she goes from
star witness to chop suey.

Dwight eyes the HAREM: A raven-haired girl flinches on "chop suey." She is: MOONBEAM (19).

LE VAN KIM

One who would desecrate such
perfection is a most unfortunate
chier le chien.

FRED

So help us find her.

LE VAN KIM

I dismissed her a fortnight ago.
Her charms were manifold but she
possessed a penchant for narcotics,
an intolerable vice amongst my
flock.

FRED
Your *flock*?

LE VAN KIM
Your tone betrays distaste.

FRED
I find you distasteful.

LE VAN KIM
The harem tradition extends time
out of mind, from Venetian
ambassadors to the Turkish sultans
of old.

FRED
It's an abomination.

LE VAN KIM
My *palais* shelters my lambs from
such as the man you seek. They
want for nothing, require only
love, desire nothing but to give it
in return. Your happiness is *their*
happiness.

Kim signals the harem. Two girls zombie-drift over to Fred.

LE VAN KIM (CONT'D)
Why not make them happy, *Sergent*?

FRED
I'm married.

LE VAN KIM
She must be a great beauty to
inspire such loyalty. How I would
love to help her realize her full
potential.

Fred goes for Kim. Guards raise their AKs. Everybody
freezes.

DWIGHT
(off Fred)
Useless as balls on a preacher.

Kim and Dwight laugh; Fred steams. Guards lower their AKs.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
For old time's sake --gimme a name,
I'm out of your hair.

LE VAN KIM

In that regard I can proffer no assistance. I christen each member of my flock anew. I find it helpful in breaking tiresome inhibitions.

FRED

Try this one: Legion Gringo.

DWIGHT

That name mean anything to you?

LE VAN KIM

I know it only as the *nom de guerre* of your executioner.

FRED

Then we're done here.

DWIGHT

I'm not.

(off the Harem)

With the sultan's permission, of course.

LE VAN KIM

Your obstreperous *Sergent* is not one of the world as you and I. We make no apologies for our appetites, no?

FRED

Mr. Mueller, I don't--

DWIGHT

Life's too short for apologies.

Kim lays a handkerchief in Dwight's open palm.

LE VAN KIM

When the sultan had pleased to choose a damsel, he dropped a kerchief at the feet of his *femme* and then the true revels began.

Dwight walks the harem. Stops at MOONBEAM. Drops the handkerchief. It see-saws down/lands on her foot.

DWIGHT

You.

LE VAN KIM

Charmante! She will make your
"Lazarus" rise again and again.

FRED

God's name are you doing?

DWIGHT

What's it look like, choirboy? Go
sit in the car and think about your
wife.

Dwight shoulders past him, Moonbeam on his arm. EDITH PIAF
sings them out.

INT. HANOI HILTON (BEDCHAMBER) - NEXT

On a frilly 4-poster: MOONBEAM, rubbing her thighs together.

MOONBEAM

Name...your...fuck.

DWIGHT

Don't talk like that.

MOONBEAM

Why not? You like a little girl
lost? You wanna be the big bad
wolf?

DWIGHT

What's your name?

MOONBEAM

I'm a fine frame with no parts
lame.

DWIGHT

Can it.

He goes to her. Covers her body with a sheet.

MOONBEAM

Are we gonna ball? 'cause you're
kinda freakin' me out...

DWIGHT

Answer my question.

MOONBEAM

Moonbeam.

DWIGHT

Your *real* name, not what that zipperhead tagged you.

MOONBEAM/EVANGELINE

Evangeline.

DWIGHT

Evangeline-what?

EVANGELINE

Evangeline Dull, Mr. Nosey.

DWIGHT

(off Polaroid)

Who is she?

EVANGELINE

I shouldn't talk to you; I could get in trouble talking to you.

DWIGHT

There's a bad man out there, Evangeline. Asking the same questions I am. If he gets his answers before I get mine? They'll bury her in a shoebox.

EVANGELINE

We were sorta-friends. Small town girls 'n all.

DWIGHT

Whereabouts from?

EVANGELINE

Her or me?

DWIGHT

You first.

EVANGELINE

This lame-o town in lame-o Delaware, population lame-o.

DWIGHT

And her?

EVANGELINE

Iowa or Idaho, I always mix 'em up. Some burg there, similarly lame.

DWIGHT

Talk to me about her.

EVANGELINE

She won a beauty pageant, thought
she'd come out here and they'd give
her a Boulevard star right off the
bus. Stupid, right? But we all
think it.

DWIGHT

And she was doping?

EVANGELINE

She wasn't really into the balling,
just wanted to read movie mags all
day. Mr. Kim don't like us to do
dope 'cause it messes up our karma
and stuff.

DWIGHT

She ever talk about where she
copped?

EVANGELINE

A bar, heavy biker scene, named
after some kinda snake.

DWIGHT

The Fer De Lance?

EVANGELINE

(nods)

She said the bikers were creepos,
but the dope was the stuff dreams
were made of.

DWIGHT

What is her name?

EVANGELINE

Kathy. Kathy Moffat?

Dwight skims her c-notes from his bounty cash roll.

DWIGHT

Take this and sock it. First
chance you get, you ditch this
freak show and get a ticket back to
Lame City.

EVANGELINE

Holy cow, mister --bus ticket's
only forty scoots.

DWIGHT

Then buy yourself four hundred and
sixty ice cream sodas on me.

She nods; he stands to leave; she blows him a kiss; he
catches it and blows one back.

EXT. HANOI HILTON - DAY

Main gate grinds back. Dwight comes out. Fred by the VW.

FRED

Have a good time?

DWIGHT

Say what?

FRED

I'm petitioning Chief Frint to
relieve you of this
"investigation," and I'll see you
face charges: solicitation,
subornation--

DWIGHT

Assaulting an officer?

FRED

Try me.

DWIGHT

I *did* --and you almost got us shot
to ham and motherfuckers.

FRED

You and that girl--

DWIGHT

She hinked on the snapshot. You
missed it, 'cause you were too busy
cock-jousting the pimp.

FRED

Thick as thieves, you two.

DWIGHT

It was smile through the bile. You
think I liked it?

FRED

I think maybe you did.

DWIGHT

Careful what you put in my face,
choirboy.

FRED

Straight up: Did you have
relations with that girl?

DWIGHT

She's a material witness. I
questioned her.

FRED

Then...then: I'm sorry.

DWIGHT

Fucken' accepted.

FRED

But give me a signal, why-don't-
you? Work with me.

DWIGHT

Sorry I didn't signal.

FRED

F-freaking accepted.

They pace off the bad blood. Tight rooster steps.

DWIGHT

Did you really just say "have
relations with that girl?"

FRED

So if I did?

DWIGHT

Can't you just say "fuck" like the
rest of the human race?

FRED

Voltaire said profanity was
indicative of a lack of
imagination.

DWIGHT

Yeah, and Balzac was an ass man --
what's your point?

They crack trade grins. Fred pushes his glasses up his nose.

FRED
So'd your new friend come through
on girl?

DWIGHT
Our girl is Kathy Moffat. From
Iowa or Idaho. Dreamer and a
doper.

FRED
Get a line on her connection?

DWIGHT
Last known: The Fer De Lance.

FRED
Place has a bad rep.

DWIGHT
Bad as you want.

EXT. THE FER DE LANCE - DAY

San Pedro juke joint. VW rolls up. Six mother-humping
Harleys out front. Dwight chambers a round in the Colt.
Fred checks his .38.

DWIGHT
Whoa, where you goin', Padre?

FRED
We're gonna brace the bikers.

DWIGHT
I'm gonna brace the bikers. You're
gonna squawk R&I, see if they can
fill in some blanks on this Kathy.

Dwight drops the glove box: a police scanner/radio.

FRED
You think I'm a weak sister?

DWIGHT
We go in there all swinging-dick
probable cause they're just gonna
piss on our leg.

FRED
If you tumble she's in there--

DWIGHT

--I fall back, signal you, and we bring her out. Together.

FRED

Five minutes and I'm coming in regardless.

DWIGHT

Have a little faith, choirboy.

INT. THE FER DE LANCE - NEXT

Walls decked with Nazi shit: Iron Crosses, Luftwaffe insignias, an American flag with Swastikas for stars.

THE FER DE LANCE MOTORCYCLE CLUB. Big dudes. Beards/jailhouse tats. MOTORCYCLE MAMAS on their laps.

DWIGHT

I'll take a beer.

CHAPTER PRESIDENT BILLY BATTIS (40s):

BILLY

This here's a private social club, brother. Reserved for Fer de Lance members and their mamas. Only them what fly the colors is welcome.

Billy shows off the colors on his vest: A brown pit viper striking under a Swastika sunset.

DWIGHT

I don't know why you guys are so up on Hitler. He killed a lot of retard.

BILLY

I don't think you know where you are, cager.

Bikers get off bar stools in unison/Mamas hop off their laps.

DWIGHT

(off Polaroid)

Kathy Moffat. I'm lookin' for her. Really lookin'.

BILLY

What's your stake in her?

DWIGHT
I'm a friend of the family.

BILLY
Do not take a tone with me,
brother.

DWIGHT
I ain't your brother, pecker gnat--
I'm your problem.

Billy rifles his beer bottle at Dwight. It POCKS off his head. Bikers rush him. He pulls the Colt. He slips in beer suds. He drops the Colt. A MAMA kicks it away.

BILLY
Problem solved.

Dwight spits in his face. Billy head-butts him. Dwight gags blood out his nose.

BILLY (CONT'D)
I don't know if you had a dream you were The Man and forgot to wake up, or if yer just crazy as a shithouse mouse. Ain't no never mind to me.

DWIGHT
--where is she?

Bikers THWAP Dwight's rips with leaded pool cues.

BILLY
I believe I was speakin'. Little Miss Moffat had pussynality to spare. I made her for a stone junkie quick enough. Trouble is, she's also a stone cocktease. She glommed my dope and still wouldn't get off some leg. Before I could teach her the way of the snake, she lammed with my own personal stash.

Billy unbuckles his bike chain belt.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Bein' yer a friend of the family, maybe you could enlighten me as to that bitch booster's whereabouts.

Billy cocks his chain belt back. Dwight gets ready for it.

BILLY (CONT'D)
World of hurt brother --you got a
ticket to ride.

Gunshot roar. Everyone jumps/spins/ducks. FRED, in the doorway, holding the ITHACA, covering the bar.

FRED
Let him go.

Bikers freeze. Fred pumps a fresh shell in the Ithaca.

FRED (CONT'D)
Please.

Billy nods. Bikers release Dwight.

DWIGHT
Was that really five minutes?

Dwight grins; Fred grins. His glasses sweat-slide down his nose. He reflex takes a hand off the Ithaca to fix them.

BILLY
Take 'em.

Biker swings his cue. Fred ducks. Cue smashes another biker in the throat. Biker drops. Dwight batter-rams Billy. Biker whiskeys Fred's face/blinds him. Fred drops the Ithaca. Biker unloads on Fred; Fred punches back blind.

Billy spins. He/Dwight hit the wall. Nazi helmets rain down. A Motorcycle Mama jumps on Dwight's back. Dwight spins. Momentum carries her off his back/into the jukebox. Dwight's Colt falls from her waistband.

Fred gets his biker in a choke hold; rides him to the floor. Billy grabs the Colt, levels it at Dwight. Fred lunges, grabs Billy's hand, slams the palm flat on the bar.

Fred pulls a SWITCHBLADE. Stabs it down through Billy's hand, pinning it to the bar. Billy girl-screams. Bikers back off. Billy drops the Colt/Dwight reflex catches it.

FRED
Now: Where were we?

DWIGHT
Kathy Moffat.

FRED
You heard the man. Give.

BILLY
She split--

DWIGHT
Since when?

BILLY
Check a fuckin' milk carton--

Dwight twists the switchblade. Bone on metal squeal.

BILLY (CONT'D)
--couple, three days--

DWIGHT
Where? *

BILLY
I dunno, man --she was fuckin used
up; where's a hype crash when they
got nowhere else to go? *

Dwight and Fred trade looks; Dwight indicates "move on" *

FRED
Since you're feelin' cooperative.
Legion Gringo--

DWIGHT
--that name mean anything to you?

BILLY
I don't know what that is, just
gimme my hand, man, I need my hand
to ride... *

Dwight jerks the blade out. Billy slides to the floor.

VOICE (O.S.)
Uh, do you sirs mean Legion Gringo
like from the comic book?

Dwight/Fred turn to the voice: HANK MOONJEANS (24), stepping
out of the commode; acne scars, tree-trunk arms.

FRED
Comic book?

HANK
I'm a collector. Legion Gringo was
the main character in The Die Song.

DWIGHT
And what is that?

HANK
Super-rare comic. Technically
graphic novel. Now outta print.

DWIGHT
You got one?

HANK
No, sir, wish to say. It'd be
worth a bundle. They say it's like
a snuff film on paper. Real spooky
stuff.

(beat)
I mostly collect Sci-fi.

DWIGHT
What the fuck is Sci-fi?

HANK
Science Fiction.

FRED
Like Star Trek.

DWIGHT
What the fuck is Star Trek?

HANK
TV show.

FRED
Classic TV show.

HANK
You believe they cancelled it?

FRED
Colossal blunder.

DWIGHT
Back to The Die Song.

HANK
Man you really wanna talk to is
Windom. He's got a place on
Cherokee: Six Demon Bag. All
things, passing strange, between
heaven and earth.

Dwight grabs the Ithaca. He/Fred back up to the door.

FRED
Thanks for the tip.

HANK
'May you boldly go where no man has
gone before,'

FRED
'See you in the final fr--'

Dwight grabs his necktie and pulls him out the door.

INT. SUN DRUG PHARMACY - AFTERNOON

Dwight/Fred camped out at a back booth. Fred putting iodine on his bar-fight cuts. A Free Press open before them. Dwight tries to plug up his bloody nose with cotton swabs.

FRED
That's not how you stop a bloody
nose.

DWIGHT
No, huh?

Fred digs in his pocket. Comes up with a QUARTER.

FRED (CONT'D)
Put this between your lower lip and
your lower teeth.

DWIGHT
Get outta here.

FRED
My hand to God.

Dwight sticks the quarter in his lower lip.

DWIGHT
Now what?

FRED
Give it a minute.

Dwight gives it a minute.

DWIGHT
I feel like a fucken' monkey.

While Dwight waits, Fred pages past the Manson interviews, *
through the movie listings: *

FRED
Look at this.

DWIGHT
Huh.

FRED
Every advertisement is either a man
with a gun or a woman in her
brassiere. Whatever happened to
just good stories?

DWIGHT
The shit they call movies these
days, it's a fucken' tragedy. All
woe-is-me shit starring candy-asses
and skanks.

FRED
My wife and I usually stay in. We
like the Marcus Welby program. A
good dilemma, every week.

DWIGHT
I saw a good movie last night.

FRED
Which?

DWIGHT
Some western. Jimmy Stewart
dragging a dead outlaw home to the
range. *That's* a movie.

FRED
(off Dwight's nose)
How is it?

Dwight fingers his nostrils --no blood.

DWIGHT
Fucken' voodoo --it stopped.

FRED
Told ya.

DWIGHT
Can I take the quarter out now?

Fred nods; Dwight flips him back the quarter. Fred cleans
blood off his switchblade.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
I take it there's a tale that goes
with the toad-sticker?

FRED
There surely is.

DWIGHT
Care to share?

FRED
Sure. Soon as you spill on Jane.

DWIGHT
Skip it. You wanna code-7?

FRED
I could eat.

DWIGHT
I know a jammin' barbecue joint.
Korean, but minimal dog. They
bounce for cops.

FRED
I, uh, I usually brown-bag.

DWIGHT
Chow comes with the badge, law of
the land.

FRED
It's an unethical custom I choose
not to perpetuate.
(beat)
Besides, my wife makes a "jamming"
cheese sandwich.

DWIGHT
Yeah?

FRED
Yeah.
(beat)
Jammin'.

EXT. SUN DRUG PHARMACY - NEXT

Dwight/Fred hit the sidewalk, head for the VW.

FRED
What's your beef with Kohner?

*
*

DWIGHT

We worked Vice in '52...he'd shake
 down whores for their cash then
 bust 'em anyway; send 'em back
 broke to their Daddy-o's to catch a
 beating. I tried to call him off,
 he said go fuck myself.

(beat)

Everybody but Walt knew his old
 lady was spendin' a lot of nights
 at a jazz joint on Newton --and a
 lot of mornings with a side man at
 said joint. So I got some shots of
 Mrs. Kohner gettin' tromboned and
 put 'em up in the muster room.

FRED

Good Lord.

INT. SIX DEMON BAG - DAY

Dwight/Fred enter. Occult oddities abound. WINDOM (50s),
 the proprietor, smoking a hookah.

WINDOM

Hail fellows --welcome to the
 bazaar of the bizarre.

FRED

(badges him)

Like to ask you some questions.

WINDOM

My late wife was clairvoyant. Upon
 departing our dimension she willed
 her psychic endowments to me.
 Indulge me?

Windom puts a hand to his hand zones out; Dwight eye-rolls.

WINDOM (CONT'D)

You're here on dark business.

DWIGHT

No shit, Sherlock.

WINDOM

There's been a death.

FRED

Maybe.

WINDOM

You seek a great and terrible man.

FRED

Yes --go on.

WINDOM

Sadly, the thread breaks there.

DWIGHT

Old lady wasn't much of a mind-reader, huh?

WINDOM

No, but an oral dynamo.

(beat)

What brings you to my dubious domain?

FRED

Legion Gringo--

DWIGHT

--that name mean anything to you?

INT. SIX DEMON BAG (BACK ROOM) - NEXT

Dwight/Fred watch Windom display a very old GRAPHIC NOVEL; the title page reads (in Spanish): THE DIE SONG, VOL. 1.

WINDOM

All answers to come from The Die Song begin with the question of Domingo Linares...

Windom tweezer-turns Die Song pages; the muted rust-blood images fill the screen concurrent with his narration:

WINDOM (CONT'D)

...born on All Saint's Day, 1911, during a black mass held in the Pyrenees.

DWIGHT

Black mass?

FRED

Ritual profanation of the Host.

WINDOM

Witchcraft, sacrifices, orgies...

DWIGHT

Fun fun fun till daddy took the T-bird away.

WINDOM

Domingo was one of many bastards; denied his father's patronage; banished to the servant's quarters, he trapped rodents, conducted 'experiments' on them. A younger sister, Viola, was his assistant, until her disappearance in 1921. Soon after, Domingo lost interest in rodents.

FRED

Jesus wept.

WINDOM

He may have.

(beat)

Domingo developed an expansive interior fantasy life, complete with an alter ego--

DWIGHT

Legion Gringo.

WINDOM

--when he was Domingo, he was a cur, a bed-wetter, but when he was Legion, at night, always at night, he was invincible and would roam the countryside to sate his dark appetites.

FRED

Prostitutes.

WINDOM

They provided a brief physical release, but it was never enough. He grew to hate the power they held over him. Their mocking laughter (real and imagined) haunted him. His soul's schism grew --Legion consumed Domingo.

(beat)

One night, a strumpet was stumbling home, slurring a tune. But what Legion heard was her SOUL. Singing to HIM. Begging Him to free her from her pitiful station.

(MORE)

WINDOM (cont'd)

This song of souls, that only He could hear, He called The Die Song.

FRED

He killed her.

WINDOM

And marked the event with the first volume of The Die Song, his chronicle. That, and every volume after, inked in the victim's blood.

Windom turns pages. Dried-blood motes float off the pages. Queasy shit blurs by. LEGION GRINGO slaughters prostitutes in 1930s Provincial Spain locales.

WINDOM (CONT'D)

He became God's executioner-prophet, the novels his bloody gospels; a *cause celebre* across Europe. Salon re-enactments of his slaughters followed. The Surrealists swooned. Hitler had his bedtime reading.

A "splash panel": A dead whore bound to a 4-post bed. Her chest split open, her EYES GONE.

WINDOM

It was said his dying wish was that his acts inspire others.

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DWIGHT

So we gotta groupie.

FRED

A disciple.

They turn to leave; Windom turns them back.

WINDOM

Might I interest you in my latest acquisition?

Windom displays a MANSON FAMILY LUNCH-BOX.

WINDOM (CONT'D)

These are just in, very popular with the youngsters and sure to be a hit as a coming year collectible.

Dwight/Fred cold-eye Windom.

DWIGHT
We brown bag.

EXT. SIX DEMON BAG - DUSK

Dwight and Fred exit the store; head for the VW; they lean against it and spitball:

FRED
Least now we know where our killer
got his handle.

DWIGHT
Why couldn't the fucker read
Peanuts?

From inside the VW: Scanner-static-chatter.

DISPATCH (V.O.)
Code 3, all units, see the man,
corner of Alameda and Century, be
advised, possible DB...

DWIGHT
Alameda and Century, she said?

FRED
Yeah. Why? You know it?

EXT. THE GLITTER DOME - NIGHT

Arc lights flare. Cops. Press. Lookie-loos. VW pulls up. Dwight jolts out/Fred right behind him. Dwight/Fred pass the CORONER, dictating to his ASSISTANT:

CORONER
...victim's time of death
approximately between three and six
AM this morning...

Elmer setting up a chain of command; Walt beside him.

WALT
(off Dwight)
What's he doin' here?

FRED
Ease off, huh?

WALT
Fuck yourself, Judas.

DWIGHT

She's not dead--

ELMER

Not here, not like this.

FRED

Sir, if I could--

ELMER

No. You abandoned your post and
your partner and you'll be lucky
not to be brought up on charges.

DWIGHT

Just tell me she's not dead--

WALT

Whore's justice.

Dwight charges him. Bluesuits pry them apart.

ELMER

Listen to me now, son. It's over.

DWIGHT

It's not over, nothing's over, you
don't say that--

ELMER

You're not hearing me, you're
listening okay, you're not *hearing*
me.

DWIGHT

He did her 'cause of me, you yank
me now she's dead for nothing--

ELMER

I can't contain this. The world
sniffs blood.

DWIGHT

You put me on this, you showed me
that girl's picture--

ELMER

You go home now.

DWIGHT

I don't fucking "go home." I say
when it's over, I say that.

ELMER

We can't save them. Not all of them.

DWIGHT

Give me my last day.

ELMER

We'll take care of her, Dwight.

He turns. Walks away. Dwight stops him with:

DWIGHT

"Stand for these dead?" You stand for yours.

Elmer stops. Half-turns. An old man's nod:

ELMER

You got your day.

(beat)

But, and I am saying this to you as your friend: You do not need to see what's in there.

Dwight bulls past him. Fred at his side.

INT. THE GLITTER DOME (BACKSTAGE) - NEXT

Backstage hall. A gauntlet of strippers. Dwight/Fred walk through them. Strippers' eyes fall as they pass by.

Vicky's dressing room. The old gold star. Fred badges them past a BLUESUIT DOOR GUARD.

INT. THE GLITTER DOME (DRESSING ROOM) - NEXT

Dwight/Fred step in. They reel at the blood-stink.

FRED

Jesus wept...

VICKY, naked on the cot, splayed out, ripped up the middle, the cot a swamp of blood and HER EYES ARE GONE. "Legion Gringo" carved into her torso, and:

Bloody-hand scrawled on the vanity mirror:

open season on whores

Dwight punches the mirror to shards. He fucks up his hand. Bluesuits hustle him out of the dressing room.

INT. THE GLITTER DOME (STAGE) - CONTINUOUS

Dwight pin-balls to the stage; his legs go; he chugs Romilar. He weeps/snots/keens. His eyes half-mast; his lips mash out numb; he snores out trying to say "vicky."

INT. VOLKSWAGEN (PARKED) - NIGHT

Dwight comes to in the VW. Parked in front of St. Vibiana's cathedral. His hand's fucked up from punching the mirror.

He lurches out of the car, up the church steps. Shoulders through the big wooden doors.

INT. ST. VIBIANA'S CATHEDRAL - NEXT

Dwight looks around at the congregation: piss bums, dopers, Vietnam amputees, blood bank habitues, tranny whores, runaway kids, old Mex ladies worrying rosaries. Fred, lighting votive candles. Dwight sits beside him.

FRED
Better to light a candle than curse
the darkness.
(beat)
For our girls.

DWIGHT
Why'd you stop here?

FRED
I come here every day, at end-of-
watch. Helps to unburden myself.
You should try it.

DWIGHT
Do you "pray?"

FRED
Sure.

DWIGHT
What do you pray for?

FRED
Strength.

Fred lights nine candles. Looks at Dwight. Lights a tenth.

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FRED (CONT'D)
You wanna tell me your side of
Jane?

DWIGHT
No.

FRED
Alright.

DWIGHT
Summer of '61. Young girls getting
dead. Killer kept them alive, did
bad things, buried them alive when
he was finished. Press baptized
him "Gravedigger."

FRED
I read about it.

DWIGHT
Elmer was my rabbi in Homicide. He
begged the white-shirts for a task
force. They'd detached one man.
Elmer chose me and gave me my
catechism: "They all matter,"

FRED
"--or none of them do."

DWIGHT
I was some hot shit. Sky-high
clearance rate, gung-ho rep,
Sherlock of the Southland. The
Gravedigger case was to exemplify
swift justice and consecrate my
legend-status. Everyone knew that
I'd get him.

(beat)
Except...I couldn't. And more
bodies. More bodies. More bodies.

(beat)
Jane was #7. Gravedigger sent her
bloody sock to the station.
Fucking with us; I knew from the
other victims she had maybe four
days. I stole the sock from
Evidence, slept with it under my
pillow. I thought I could dream
where he had her. She struck fire
in my heart.

(beat)
(MORE)

DWIGHT (cont'd)

Couldn't sleep, couldn't eat, hit
the speed stayin' up, the bottle
comin' down.

(beat)

We caught a break. Ernie Moran.
Peeping Tom, pervert jacket, a real
ding. Found him in Griffith Park
with a bloody sock that matched
Jane's. And he had mud under his
nails...like he'd been digging.

(beat)

Elmer's off the case at this point.
I caught the interrogation. I'd
been up three days by then, on all
kinds of shit; I worked Moran non-
stop. Two fuckin' days. I grew
old in that room.

FRED

What happened?

DWIGHT

I broke him and he confessed, and I
cried, for all the relief in my
heart that I'd saved her after all.

(beat)

I asked Moran the last question,
the only question: Where was she?
And he laughed. He laughed at me
and so I hit him. He kept laughing
and I beat him death, so fucked up
I didn't know I'd broken ever bone
in my hands.

(beat)

It got leaked. Grand jury; civil
suit. Elmer called in favors to
skate me on the murder charge, but
goodbye gun, badge, pension. I
thought about her dying 'cause of
me, alone in the dark, waiting for
someone to bring her up into the
light. I didn't want to live,
y'know, but I was too chickenshit
to do it with a bullet. So I tried
every other way I knew. But my body
failed me. I couldn't die.

(beat)

And living hurt worse than death.
And that felt right. So I wrapped
my arms around that hurt and held
on for my penance.

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FRED

Kohner leaked Moran to the press?

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DWIGHT

You should be a cop when you grow up.

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FRED

You said Elmer was off the case.
Why?

DWIGHT

Jane wasn't just some girl.

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FRED

Who was she?

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DWIGHT

Came from a good family. She was a good girl. She could have been anything. Her mother died; it fucked up her and her father. She ran from him. She found a lot of bad habits; a bad crowd. Started tricking. And then she was just lost.

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FRED

She was--

DWIGHT

Jane--

FRED

No...

DWIGHT

Jane Frint--

FRED

Oh, no...

DWIGHT

Was Elmer's only child.

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INT. FRED'S HOUSE (FOYER) - NIGHT

Fred sets aside a stroller to clear the doorway for Dwight.

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FRED

The thing about babies is? Nobody tells you how much *stuff* they come with.

DWIGHT

I didn't know you had, uh;
congratulations.

FRED

We're already into the terrible
twos, but thanks.

DWIGHT

Terrible *whats*?

Fred leads Dwight down a short hall to the:

INT. FRED'S HOUSE (KITCHEN) - CONTINUOUS

A Roman Catholic calendar on the refrigerator; a saint or
feast for every day.

FRED (CONT'D)

(off oven)

My wife left us something to eat.

(beat)

I *think* it's a casserole.

Dwight shakes his head.

FRED (CONT'D)

How about a drink?

DWIGHT

Soda-pop?

Fred gets a bottle of Tullamore Dew from a cupboard; two
glasses.

Dwight shoots him a ball-busting look:

FRED

Says right in the Bible that wine
drunk with moderation is the joy
and soul of the heart.

DWIGHT

Twist my arm.

Fred pours two glasses; Dwight drinks. Fred sips, and
coughs.

FRED

You asked me about the knife.

(beat)

My father was a drunk.

(MORE)

FRED (cont'd)

My mother tried to leave him and he put her head through a plate-glass window to "ugly her up." So she couldn't remarry. She drank herself to death on my tenth birthday.

(beat)

The Jesuits called themselves God's soldiers. I liked that. I had a teacher there, name of Father Boyle. Used to make us kneel on bottle caps if we mouthed off. Rage and submission were all my parents knew; I wanted to know more. Boyle taught me: Faith manifest as strength. He was the finest man I've ever known.

(beat)

One night, this guy, kid really, broke into the rectory. A hype looking to fix. He wanted money. Boyle told him there was no money, but there was soup and a bed and fellowship. That this was God's house and that this young man was welcome.

(beat)

And this kid, he just put a knife through Boyle's throat. He just...did that. Boyle died in my arms, looking at me, but not seeing.

Fred takes the SWITCHBLADE from his pocket, turns it over in his hands.

FRED (CONT'D)

Nobody saw me take it. I kept it in my room. I'd take it out and look at it and think of holding that good man as he bled out, and I saw in his eyes: Not any peace of paradise, but fear. And I knew then that love is not enough. That all men are not in God's image. That there are...mistakes. That must be corrected: God's soldiers.

(beat)

"And let a two-edged sword lie in mine hand to execute on them the written sentence. This is the glory of all His faithful."

Dwight finishes his drink; he can't look at Fred.

DWIGHT

I killed them. Jane. Vicky.

FRED

No, but if you fold now you *will* be killing Kathy. We've got one more day and I can't do this without you so look at me:

Dwight looks at him; Fred fills Dwight's glass.

FRED (CONT'D)

End-of-watch?

DWIGHT

End-of-watch.

Dwight drinks; Fred drinks; both men settle back into their kitchen chairs.

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INT. FRED'S HOUSE (DEN) - NIGHT

Later. Dwight comes to on the couch. TV flicker-glow. Fred asleep in a chair, his 2-year-old DAUGHTER in his arms.

On TV: Sesame Street. Gordon & the Anything Muppets sing: "Consider Yourself At Home." Fred's DAUGHTER sees Dwight. She gurgles and waves; Fred stirs.

Dwight holds a bloody hand to his lips and goes "*shhh...*" She gives him this funny smile and drifts off; Dwight does, too.

BLACK; --SUPERIMPOSE--

WED. / DEC. 31

EXT. FRED'S HOUSE - MORNING

Dwight/Fred walk from the porch to the street.

DWIGHT

What's your daughter's name?

FRED

Esther. Angel of my heart.
Tougher than me. And smarter.
Gonna be the first female Chief.

DWIGHT
She's beautiful.

FRED
Thank you. I was thinking about
Jane. If I may?

Dwight shrugs; some small glance of consent.

FRED (CONT'D)
If you want to get past it, you
should pick a place. Forget where
she could be; her body. Pick a
place you think she'd like and rest
in peace in and go there and say
goodbye.

DWIGHT
Get past it?

He bulls past Fred; Fred pushes his glasses up his nose and follows.

EXT. 10 / I-405 INTERCHANGE - DAY

V.W. pulls off the interstate onto a dirt access road under the overpass; Dwight threads the car through huge concrete pillars and parks.

EXT. 10 / I-405 INTERCHANGE - DAY

Under the overpass. Dwight gets out; Fred follows him.
Traffic rumble-roars overhead.

Dwight stops a retaining wall; pallets stacked against it.
He takes out his Colt and hands it to Fred.

FRED
What are you doing?

Dwight takes out the roll of bounty cash; he keeps a single c-
note and hands the rest of the roll to Fred.

DWIGHT
You can't go with me.

FRED
Go where?

Dwight yanks pallets aside, reveals a man-size breach in the

FRED

You want to go in there alone.

DWIGHT

I will go in there alone, that's
why they come to me; that's my use
to them --the one snake they don't
kill, 'cause it eats the rats under
the barn.

FRED

I can't allow it.

DWIGHT

I'm not asking you to.

FRED

What are you asking?

DWIGHT

(beat)

I'm guess asking you to trust me.

A moment. Fred nods; Dwight ducks and steps through the
breach, into:

INT. UNDER THE 405 - DAY

A cavernous vagrant city under the 405. Dwight pin-holes his
eyes. A sick glow ahead: Barrel fires throwing sparks.

Dwight walks through: A Heroin holocaust: Junkies litter
the ground; some fixing, some fucking; some catatonic; sobs
and bedlam shrieks.

They stare up at Dwight with greasy dead eyes, he comes to a
circle of barrel fires; at the center:

A junkie wearing an old fast-food cardboard crown, seated on
a vegetable crate throne, his girl rubbing Preparation-H on
his track marks to bring down the swelling:

This man is called KING: so far gone he could be any age, any
race. His eyes bulge from all his time in the dark.

KING

You look lost.

DWIGHT

I'm looking for a girl.

KING
You think she's with us?

DWIGHT
She's a hype.

KING
And what are you? You a cop?

Dwight shakes his head;

DWIGHT
She's white. About eighteen years old.

KING
What you want her for?

DWIGHT
She's in trouble.

KING
Why would I give her to you?

DWIGHT
I can help her.

King laughs; most of his teeth are rotted to gums; he shoos his girl away; his finger-tips are burnt-black; he steeples them under his chin;

KING
Help her? Shit --you can't even help yourself.

DWIGHT
I've got money.

KING
So you're not lookin' for a girl;
you're lookin' to buy a girl.

King laughs; Dwight pulls out his c-note; offers it.

KING (CONT'D)
I'll tell you what is the what:
You prove to me you ain't no badge
and we'll be fine as wine.

King nods to his works; needle, spoon, junkie.

DWIGHT
No.

KING

Kathy, right? That's her name. I
hear she does anything to fix.
Anything.

Dwight pops a cold sweat; he starts to tremble.

KING

She's gettin' a real rep down here.
A real good attitude. I think it
was Cecil that said when he was
done with her...there wouldn't be
enough left to wet a stamp.

Dwight shuts his eyes; he thrums like a bull pissing nails.

KING (CONT'D)

A girl like that. A place like
this. She could fall off the
world.

Dwight opens his eyes; he slowly rolls up his sleeve; King
sees his old track marks and grins.

KING (CONT'D)

A fellow traveler.

Dwight ties off with his neck-tie. King preps a spike; he
kisses the tip of the needle and hands it to Dwight.

KING (CONT'D)

Been awhile?
(Dwight nods)
Just like fallin' off a bike.

Dwight finds a vein; he fixes; the dope falls on him like a
wall; he sways back into the black, his head drops between
his knees.

KING (CONT'D)

I guess you're real.

Dwight slurs and manages:

DWIGHT

--the girl

King takes Dwight's money and leads him; Dwight floats along
the dark cavern; nightmare shadows kamikaze him.

Junkies propped up against the wall, a miasma of filth; A
YOUNG GIRL sucking some junkie's cock as he nods off.

DWIGHT

Kathy.

She looks up at him: KATHY MOFFAT (18); wheat-belt beauty on the skids; covered in filth. She comes up swinging; a pair of HANDCUFFS on her right wrist; cuff slices Dwight's forehead; Kathy scrambles past him.

Dwight goes after her; blind-man hurtles through the cavern; his high boomerangs hard; barrel fires throw up these wisps of glimpses: Children drinking Sterno; old women scratching their hands bloody on the walls; a heroin baby screaming in a shopping cart crib; a trash-can dog roasting on a spit.

Dwight slips in junkie feces; he sprawls; into a pile of cold corpses, junkie ODs --the other junkies stripping clothes and shoes off the corpses; he screams and vomits.

To the side/up ahead: This wedge of daylight; Kathy's shape disappears through it. Dwight follows; daylight blinding him; daylight heaving closer and closer.

EXT. 10 / I-405 INTERCHANGE - DAY

Kathy bursts out of the tunnel; Fred's leaning on the VW; he sees her; he runs after her.

Dwight bursts out of the tunnel; the whole world goes tilt; he runs anyway, swaying and listing.

Kathy runs; she kicks off her shoes; Fred sprints --he catches up to her, grabs her:

FRED
Miss, it's alright--

She kicks him in the balls. He DROPS. Kathy runs. Dwight huff-puffs behind her; Kathy hits a chain-link fence; starts to climb; Dwight lunges; pulls her down.

KATHY
Lemme go, cocksucker--

She fights like a rattlesnake in a trash bag.

DWIGHT
It's alright, I got you, you're safe, now, just there now there...

He holds her; his big arms bind her. She sobs her fight out spent. Fred limps over holding Kathy's shoes.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909) - DAY*
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Fred opens the door. Dwight steps past, Kathy in his arms. He drops her on the bed. He turns, trips past Fred, to the bathroom.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909 / BATHROOM) - DAY*
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Dwight falls in, pulls the door shut; his legs go; he falls back against the door, blocking it.

He hugs himself with his arms and rocks; he bangs his head against the door; his teeth clench; he chokes; he drools; he drags his head up; he eye to eyes with himself in the mirror.

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DWIGHT

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No no no, straighten up, straighten up, you fuck, for her.

He throws jabs at his face; his ring cuts his face; he gets to the sink; he drinks from the tap like a dog; he jams his head under the faucet; cold water shocks his neck, soaks him.

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*INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909) - DAY

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Fred looks from the bathroom to Kathy on the bed; shuddering and shivering on the bed; he lays the coverlet over her.

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Behind him, Dwight comes out of the bathroom, his upper body sopping wet, his lips flushed blue from the cold water.

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Fred looks at him; Dwight looks back. A moment.

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Fred steps aside and lets Dwight go to Kathy's side. He very gently shakes her; she comes around a bit.

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KATHY

Fuck're you guys?

FRED

I'm Sergeant Melba, LAPD. This is Mr. Mueller.

KATHY

Thisz a fucking humbug bust--

FRED

We know what you saw.

KATHY

I didn't see shit, man --what I
saw?

DWIGHT

--tell us about The Die Song.

She bolts back oh-fuck; she flattens to the wall.

KATHY

He sent you to find me, didn't he,
didn't he, fuck,

FRED

The man that tried to hurt you?

DWIGHT

We're gonna put him under the
world.

Her eyes get this freaky glow, her smile comes on WRONG.

KATHY

--listen. I, need somethin', maybe
you guys could get it for me? If
you could score for me, just a
taste, it's been all day and I'm
hurtin' for certain...

FRED

You're coming down. You're going
to stay down.

KATHY

I don't got any money, but I can
make you feel real good. How do
you like it? You wanna double-dip?

DWIGHT

How old are you?

KATHY

I'm still tight, I promise.

Dwight takes her hands; her sleeve rides up; he sees the
track marks on her arms.

KATHY

Do anything you want to me, I don't
give a shit, just pleeease.

DWIGHT
(off Romilar)
Drink some. It'll level you out.

KATHY
What do you know about it?

DWIGHT
Look in my eyes.

She looks in his eyes; she sees his pupils are dope-pinned;
Fred looks at his shoes.

She sips the Romilar.

DWIGHT
Better, now?

KATHY
No, like shit.

She sips. He inspects her HANDCUFFED WRIST.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
(to Fred)
Smith & Wesson.

FRED
Then my key should work.

It does. Dwight pops the cuffs off/pockets them.

KATHY
What's your name?

FRED
Fred.

KATHY
Sorry about your balls, Fred.

Fred blanches. Dwight chuckles. Kathy levels.

KATHY (CONT'D)
So you found me, so whoopee, so
what's now?

DWIGHT
You're a brave, girl, just to be
alive...

FRED

...but there's one more thing you
need to do.

KATHY

I...I can't help you, I don't think
I can help you.

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DWIGHT

Be brave a little longer.

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She shaky-sighs; she scratches her arms and plucks at her
hair; she arms snot from her nose.

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KATHY

I was on the street. I met a girl
named Michelle.

FRED

She was a prostitute?

KATHY

She was my *friend*.

EXT. SOME L.A. STREET - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

KATHY AND: MICHELLE WHITE (20s), red-head; they're on a
corner, shivering and sharing smokes.

KATHY (V.O.)

It was Christmas Eve, and cold.
Michelle said lots of johns got
lonely on the Eve...

A CAR drifts to a stop across the street. Christmas music on
the radio; Frankie Avalon croons carols.

KATHY (V.O.)

A man. In a car.

FRED (V.O.)

What kind of car?

KATHY

I don't know cars. Maybe it was
gray.

A WHIP ANTENNA on the back of the car.

DWIGHT (V.O.)

Did it have a big whip antenna on
the back?

KATHY (V.O.)
How'd you know that?

DWIGHT (V.O.)
Never mind; go on.

KATHY (V.O.)
Man in it called us over, asked us
our names, we told him, he said
they were pretty names for pretty
girls...

THE MAN's face is shadowed; the dome light is dark. Girls
start for the car. A gloved hand comes out the window/halts
them.

KATHY (V.O.)
He didn't want us to get close, not
in the car. He told us to meet him
at the Cum On Inn. Room 7. Like
he had it already set up.

DWIGHT (V.O.)
How'd he know you'd show?

DRIVER'S hand comes out with two one hundred dollar bills.
He tears them in half, drops two halves to the street.

INT. CUM-ON INN - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Cabin-style scum-hole. Kathy/Michelle enter, shuck their
coats, light up smokes. Michelle flicks a light switch; no
light comes on.

Across the room THE MAN sits in shadows.

FRED (V.O.)
So: You're in this room--

KATHY (V.O.)
--and the bed's still up, and there
the lights are off and it's all
wrong--

DWIGHT (V.O.)
--but you needed the money--

KATHY (V.O.)
--but we needed the money.

A PAIR OF SMITH & WESSON CUFFS slide across the floor and
stop at Kathy's foot.

KATHY

I dunno--

MAN (O.S.)

I don't pay if you don't play.

We identify the voice in the shadows as that of ELMER
FRINT'S.

Kathy and Michelle have no idea who the voice belongs to; and
 Dwight and Fred aren't hearing Elmer's voice for themselves.

MICHELLE

(to Kathy)

It's okay, cream-puff --he just
 knows we been extra naughty.

Kathy snaps a cuff around her right wrist.

ELMER

Now put the other one on that right
 over there.

She looks down; he means the radiator; she clicks the other
 cuff around a radiator pipe.

ELMER

That's a good girl.

MICHELLE

How 'bout me, Santa-man?

ELMER

Take that shit off. Do it slow.

She shucks her boots/drops her mini/strips her halter.

ELMER (CONT'D)

Dance for me.

MICHELLE

I dance better with music.

ELMER

There's music all around.

She dances; Elmer produces a POLAROID camera, snaps a picture
 of Michelle. In the dark room, the flashes are blinding; the
 girls flinch under their glare.

He turns the camera on Kathy:

ELMER (CONT'D)

(to Kathy)

You remind me of my daughter.

*
*
*

Flashbulb flare.

*

KATHY

Yeah?

*
*

Flashbulb flare.

*

ELMER

She died.

*
*

Flare/whir/slide: Pictures slip to the floor. Elmer sets aside the camera; beckons Michelle.

*
*

She goes to the dark corner; Elmer draws her into him, into the shadows; Kathy watches Michelle's back as she straddles Elmer.

*
*
*

MICHELLE

Been a long time since somebody did this for you, huh?

*
*
*

ELMER

1963. The day Kennedy was shot.

*

MICHELLE

I can tell --you got a fucking diamond cutter, baby.

*
*
*

ELMER

I'll bet you say that to all the johns, darlin.

*
*
*

MICHELLE

Nuh-uh. I bet it could tear me apart.

*
*
*

ELMER

I'd like to.

*

MICHELLE

You wanna punish me?

*

ELMER

I want to punish you.

*

MICHELLE

I need it.

*

ELMER

I know you do.

MICHELLE

Yeah, you know me. Now put me down
and fuck me and make a lake on the
bed.

ELMER

Do you hear it?

MICHELLE

Hear what?

ELMER

It's so soft, you have to listen so
closely.

MICHELLE

Don't talk, let me do my thing.

ELMER

And when you hear it, that means
you're ready.

MICHELLE

Ready for what?

ELMER

Your Die Song.

A blade flashes in his hand; he slashes her throat and shoves her mouth to his shoulder to bury her thin wet scream.

Kathy wrenches at her cuffs; before she can scream, Michelle's arterial spray splashes her face, shocks her silent.

Elmer shrugs off Michelle, stands up, wet with her blood, breathing hard, turns to Kathy; as Michelle bleeds out.

ELMER (CONT'D)

I hear yours too, Kathy. I've heard so many. But yours -- a lullaby for angels. Do you hear it?

She throws her weight; radiator pipe busts; Elmer goes for her; he slips in Michelle's blood; Kathy stumbles for the door, footsteps coming behind her, she falls outside the room.

EXT. CUM-ON INN - NEXT

She jolts away/across the parking lot; to the street; she throws a glance back; Elmer comes to the door, but doesn't step out; he steps back into the room, back into shadows.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909) - DUSK

Kathy finishes the tale; she wraps herself in a blanket.

FRED
Jesus wept.

KATHY
I left her there, my friend to die.

DWIGHT
She was already gone. You did just right.

FRED
Why didn't you come to the police?

KATHY
I didn't want my folks to know what I am now. A junkie. A whore. They can't know--

DWIGHT
They won't.

FRED
Describe him.

KATHY
I dunno, I was stoned. He fixed the lights in the room so we couldn't see him, fuck, her blood was in my eyes...

DWIGHT
Try.

KATHY
He was white...he sounded older...not a young guy. Just...normal.

She's fading Codeine-woozy; she lies back. She looks so young.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*
*

KATHY

oh, I forgot, there was somethin'

FRED

Go on.

KATHY

his name.

FRED

You heard his name.

KATHY

um-huh

DWIGHT

What was it?

KATHY

.....hmmmmmmmm

DWIGHT

What was his name?

KATHY

he said. he said his name was
"Dwight"

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909/BATHROOM) - NEXT

Fred/Dwight. Sweating/hemmed in each other's faces.

DWIGHT

Say it was me --why would I drop my
name?

FRED

I don't know. You tell me.

Off Dwight's look;

FRED

I'm sorry, I just--

DWIGHT

You were just bein' a cop.

FRED

So where's she get "Dwight?"

*
*
*

*
*

DWIGHT

Logic it out: Somebody's tryin' to serve me up. How else would he get to Vicky?

FRED

How'd you know Gringo's car had a whip antenna?

Dwight fishes Kathy's HANDCUFFS from his pocket.

FRED (CONT'D)

A civilian could buy those.

Dwight shows: A smear of NAIL POLISH on the cuffs.

DWIGHT

That's a cop who doesn't wanna lose his cuffs in a post-bust clusterfuck.

FRED

A cop.

DWIGHT

A cop could B&E the motel rooms prior to the murders to avoid ID by the desk clerk, could grid sweep the scenes of all trace evidence, could stalk whore-turf with autonomy.

FRED

A cop who used his duty car and cuffs.

DWIGHT

Elmer's guys are bribing wits to keep Gringo outta the papers. A cop assigned those field interrogations, who had access to the kill-sites, could obfuscate evidence and divert the thrust of the investigation onto somebody else.

(beat)

Onto *me*.

FRED

A cop who knows your name.

DWIGHT

And hates me like cancer.

FRED

Kohner.

DWIGHT

He does the first one; he's high on
hooker snuffs; Kathy gets away; he
needs a fall guy.

FRED

Somebody who fits the profile.

DWIGHT

Somebody "erratic, unsound, and
feared on the streets."

FRED

Elmer taps you to go after Gringo.

DWIGHT

Which plays Kohner's way.

FRED

Kohner uses you to find Kathy.

DWIGHT

Kills Kathy, lays it on me, the
whore killings end concurrent--

FRED

--he scores the bounty and
disappears.

DWIGHT

Only he didn't count on you
crossing the street.

FRED

You like it?

DWIGHT

Much as I wanna, one thing doesn't
jive.

FRED

That being?

DWIGHT

Coroner put Vicky's time of death
early AM Tuesday, but you and
Kohner sat on me all night, right?

(beat)

Right?

FRED

I did. Kohner was drunk, said he wasn't gonna camp out all night on your account. He left to sleep it off around one AM.

(beat)

He came back at five.

DWIGHT

Walt Kohner.

FRED

Jesus Fucking Christ--

DWIGHT

--amen.

EXT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909/BALCONY) - NEXT

Dwight/Fred leaning on the balcony rail.

FRED

We can't take him out less anything than one hundred percent certainty.

DWIGHT

He on tonight?

Fred shakes his head.

FRED
Ringing in the New Year at The
Monte Carlo.

*
*
*

DWIGHT

We bring him in and we brace him.

FRED

Then?

DWIGHT

Leave 'then' to me.

FRED

Kathy said Legion told her he'd heard "so many" Die Songs. How far back does this go?

*
*
*

DWIGHT

You hit the station, pull Kohner's ARs, look for similarities between Homicide cases he worked and the Gringo snuffs.

FRED

What're you gonna do?

DWIGHT

B&E Kohner's pad for any sick-fuck mementoes that tie him to the dead whores. We meet back here eleven o'clock/this PM.

FRED

(off Kathy)

What about her?

DWIGHT

With a little luck, tomorrow morning she's on the first-thing bus back to Iowa or Idaho.

FRED

I'll call for a black and white.

DWIGHT

(off Fred's look)

Hey --you wanted this.

FRED

I still do. It's just not the way I thought it'd be.

Dwight nods. Fred nods. Their neck-ties flap in the breeze.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909) - NEXT

Dwight settles into a chair; he massages the crook of his arm where he shot up.

Blanket falls off Kathy's foot. She dream-shivers. Dwight pulls the blanket back up. He watches over her.

INT. STATION HOUSE (CENTRAL DIVISION/RECORDS) - NEXT

Fred behind a stack of Kohner's arrest reports. Station is New Year's Eve-empty. Fred sifts and searches.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909) - NIGHT

Dwight snaps awake; he fights for focus: Kathy's been watching HIM sleep.

KATHY
Bad dream?

DWIGHT
No worse than when I'm awake.

Kathy fishes her purse for smokes. She hunts for a light.

DWIGHT
I got it.

He pulls a Zippo. Lights her smoke. Lights his own.

KATHY
Thanks.

Dwight looks at purse junk: A GOLD AND PINK RIBBON

DWIGHT
What's that there?

KATHY
It's nothing, it's stupid.

DWIGHT
You're blushing, it's somethin'.

KATHY
You gotta swear you won't laugh.

DWIGHT
Alright, I swear, what is it?

She holds the ribbon up: "MISS TEEN KEOKUK, IOWA, 1968"

KATHY
You have Miss Teen Keokuk 1968 in
your custody.

DWIGHT
I'm humbled.

KATHY
It was a big deal, smart-ass. I was
in a parade. I had my own float.
I milked a cow and they took a
picture.

Dwight howls; Kathy punches his arm.

KATHY (CONT'D)
You swore you wouldn't--

DWIGHT
I didn't udder a word.

Kathy/Dwight howl. Howls fade to quiet.

KATHY
People always told me I oughta be
in pictures. That they knew they'd
see my face up in lights, someday.
(beat)
Why do they say that?

DWIGHT
It's just a way to say they think
you're beautiful.

KATHY
But it doesn't happen like that.
Nobody gets their names up lights,
not really --do they?

DWIGHT
Some do. Rest of us get stuck
holdin' the popcorn.

KATHY
And the fucked thing is, I still
don't wanna go back. Clipping
coupons and bingo and "see you in
church."

DWIGHT
Blue-plate special and the back-
seat tango.

KATHY
Girls marry the boy daddy says has
the best handshake. They all say
they love you but they just want
that.

(beat)
Dead people. Dead place.

DWIGHT
So's this.

KATHY
He killed somebody close to you.

DWIGHT

My wife; my ex-wife.

KATHY

You don't like saying "ex."

(beat)

Is that because you still loved
her?

DWIGHT

It's because even if I *didn't*, that
one chickenshit word flushes
everything two people ever shared
down the fucken' toilet.

KATHY

What was her name?

DWIGHT

Victoria.

KATHY

Was she pretty?

DWIGHT

She was a heartbreaker.

KATHY

I'm sorry how I talked to you and
your friend before. I get like
that when I--

DWIGHT

--I know.

KATHY

By the way, your friend? He's a
total square.

DWIGHT

He is.

KATHY

I bet shits rulers.

Dwight/Kathy howl. Howls fade to some big quiet.

KATHY (CONT'D)

You have to go now

DWIGHT

Yes.

KATHY
To try to end it.

DWIGHT
Yes.

He stands to leave. She stands with him.

KATHY
Can I go with you?

DWIGHT
Stay here, watch the fireworks.
Should be a show.

KATHY
Promise you'll come back.

DWIGHT
I promise you.

KATHY
Cross your heart?

DWIGHT
Cross my heart.

KATHY
And hope--

DWIGHT
--to die.

He turns to leave;

KATHY (CONT'D)
You got a New year's resolution?

He turns back;

DWIGHT
Stay above ground.

He's out the door without looking back.

INT. STATION HOUSE (CENTRAL DIVISION) - NEXT

Elmer at his desk. A paper cup of Eggnog. On the radio:
Auld Lang Syne. Fred knocks; Elmer gestures him in.

ELMER

Everybody thinks they know this song. Every year they offer a free Dining Car brunch to any listener who can call in and sing it through word for word on the air. I'll tell ya: They don't give away a lot of brunches.

FRED

Chief--

ELMER

Your wife called. Wondering where you were.

FRED

Yes, sir.

ELMER

She's worried about you. So am I.

FRED

I can explain, sir.

ELMER

You can and you will.

FRED

What I have to say would be better said outside these walls.

ELMER

Son: I'm all ears.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE (ECHO PARK) - NIGHT

Dwight sits in the VW. Walt's rancher is dark. Dwight gets out, Colt against his leg, walks to Walt's front door, leans on the doorbell; no lights, no movement, nobody home.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE (BACKYARD) - NIGHT

Dwight walks up a screen-porch. House door locked. He gouges the jam with GRINGO's cuffs. Door gives.

INT. WALT'S HOUSE (BEDROOM) - NIGHT

Dwight prowls by moonlight. Bowling trophies; a framed picture of a younger Walt arm-wrestling Ernest Borgnine.

Under a mattress: A .12 gauge REMINGTON PUMP SHOTGUN. Dwight ejects the shells, pockets them. Slides the shotgun back under the mattress.

INT. WALT'S HOUSE (BASEMENT) - NEXT

Dwight pulls the bulb chain, sees: Boxes of swag: Pall Malls, Cutty Sark. Pussy pix taped up over the work-bench.

KA-CHOCK. A pump shotgun slide racked/in stereo.

WALT

Palms on the wall and lean --LEAN, motherfucker-- like to push it down. Those palms come off the wall, I turn your head into a fuckin' canoe.

DWIGHT

I make you for the nine dead--

Walt kicks his legs out; Dwight hits his knees.

WALT

Who said ya could talk?

Walt frisks him; tosses the Colt away.

WALT (CONT'D)

Turn and face me, do it slow.

(Dwight does)

Now: What shit you talkin'?

DWIGHT

Me an the choirboy got the eyeball wit stashed. You are gonna ride the lightning, fat man.

WALT

Are you high? I didn't kill no whores, you're the killer, partner.

DWIGHT

I never killed nobody that didn't deserve it. That includes you.

WALT

No? What about Jane?

Dwight charges. Walt pulls the trigger. *Click.* They collide.

INT. F-CAR (PARKED) - NEXT

Fred and Elmer duck in. Elmer shivers.

ELMER
Goose the heat, will you?

Fred does. Car heats up. Fred/Elmer shiver and confer.

ELMER (CONT'D)
Now: What's with all the cloak and dagger?

FRED
Sgt. Walt Kohner.

ELMER
What about him?

FRED
We like him as a suspect in the whore murders, sir.

ELMER
That's a serious allegation.

FRED
We have an eyeball witness--

ELMER
You found her?

FRED
We've got her stashed.

ELMER
"We?"

FRED
Dwight Mueller and myself, sir--

ELMER
And she can identify her assailant?

FRED
Yes, sir. By voice.
(beat)
We also believed he used his duty vehicle--

ELMER
Tell me on the way to the girl.

INT. WALT'S HOUSE (BASEMENT) - NIGHT

Walt stomps Dwight's foot; breaks toes. They grapple/snarl/claw. Walt punches out; he chokes Dwight over the work bench with the Remington. Dwight's gags bile out his nose.

Dwight BITES Walt's hand. Down to bone. Blood sprays his face. Veins flap. Walt screams. Dwight shakes his head like a rat-killing dog --almost tears off Walt's thumb.

Walt slacks; Dwight's hand flails, finds a paint can, he round-houses. Can smacks Walt's skull --POCK-- so hard the lid pops off; Walt falls; paint splatters across the room.

INT. F-CAR (TRAVELING) PROCESS SHOT - NIGHT

Strip lights blur and boca outside the windows.

ELMER

Dwight Mueller supports this hypothesis?

FRED

He's meeting us at the Esperanza. Possibly with corroborative evidence.

ELMER

Mueller's *not* a policeman. When he was one, he had an unparalleled record of excessive force complaints and narcotics abuse.

FRED

I'm aware of his history, sir.

ELMER

In spite of that awareness...

FRED

I go with my partner.

INT. WALT'S HOUSE (BASEMENT) - NIGHT

Walt comes to; Dwight covers him with the Colt.

WALT

Ya killed my head, ya scrote.

Dwight rolls him a bottle of swag Cutty.

DWIGHT

Have a little oil, Tin Man.
(as Walt guzzles)
Now, I got the bold strokes, but
gimme the grace notes. You did the
nine dead whores.

WALT

Christ, no--

DWIGHT

Christ ain't listenin'. You do the
first one, pick her up, nice piece
of potash, get her alone, you
couldn't get it up or she laughed
at your little pecker?

WALT

You gone psycho, man--

Dwight slaps him. Sweat/Cutty/paint drops fly.

DWIGHT

It just HAPPENS. She's on the
floor runnin' out red and it feels
GOOD, right?

WALT

No, no no

DWIGHT

SO good, you gotta do it again.
And again. Now you can't STOP
doin' it. But you shoulda locked
up Kathy right and tight 'cause you
been burned, baby.

WALT

I don't know no Kathy.

DWIGHT

Well she knows *you*, stud.

WALT

Please, just, wait, please--

DWIGHT

Don't say "please" to me. Did
those girls say "please" when you
took 'em to pieces? Did they?

Dwight slaps the Cutty from Walt's hand; it shatters.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
It was their Die Songs, right?

WALT
--their, what?

DWIGHT
They were singing to you, that they
wanted out of this life and you'd
lend a hand, right?

Dwight throws Walt around the room; Walt pisses his pants.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
Did my wife sing?

WALT
I didn't--

DWIGHT
Did she?

WALT
You know I didn't kill her.

DWIGHT
Yeah? How do I know that?

WALT
Because --you did.

EXT. ESPERANZA HOTEL - NEXT

Fred/Elmer park in back; they get out of the car; head for a service entrance. Kids run by them laughing with sparklers.

ELMER
How do we bring Kohner in?

FRED
We want you to authorize a *sub rosa* interrogation, neutral turf, maybe County Sheriff's...

ELMER
I'll call Pete Pitchess, set it up.

FRED
...we want to administer a polygraph; we want to administer sodium pentothal.
(MORE)

FRED (cont'd)
We want to confront him with our
girl and we believe he'll crack
wide open.

INT. WALT'S HOUSE (BASEMENT) - NEXT

Dwight/Walt. Walt drools Cutty.

WALT
He said you were Legion Gringo.
That you been fucked up ever since
Jane and just finally snapped. He
told me that Die Song shit was all
you.

DWIGHT
Who is 'he?'

WALT
He told me you killed Vicky and the
nine whores. He said I had to take
you out. That I could get payback
for those pictures you took of my
wife, those pictures shot me in the
heart, man...

DWIGHT
Tell me--

WALT
He said not to ask any questions.
He said I could keep the bounty.
He said I could be a hero.

Dwight jam/ocks the Colt to Walt's temple.

DWIGHT
The next thing outta your mouth is
a name, or it's the last thing
outta your mouth evermore.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (SERVICE DOOR / LAUNDRY ROOM) - NIGHT

Fred leads Elmer in. Big industrial washers and dryers
tumble and thump and slosh-roar around them.

ELMER
Your know he could be innocent.

FRED

That's why you're here, sir. I
didn't want to overstep with a
brother officer's reputation on the
line.

ELMER

You're right to be cautious.

Elmer shoots him; blows Fred's ribs out the front of his chest; washer/dryers muffle the shot. Elmer steps forward. Fred turns, charges him. They collide. Elmer drops his gun. They lock eye-to-eye. Fred fights for his life.

EXT. WALT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Dwight to the VW, gets in, starts it. Walt comes out his front door, the Remington in his good hand.

Dwight tenses, but Walt is Scotch-whipped-slack. He sway-leans on the driver's side door.

WALT

What're you gonna do?

DWIGHT

Take the mother down.

WALT

I, I fucked up. I know that.

DWIGHT

He played us both.

WALT

I still shoulda seen it. Give me
back some small thing. Take me
with you?

DWIGHT

This is mine. And Fred's.

WALT

Maybe I could help...? I'm a cop.

DWIGHT

No you're not.

WALT

What am I then?

DWIGHT
A stooge to a psycho.

Dwight takes out a shotgun shells, flips it to Walt.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
And that's on you.

Dwight drives off. Walt plops on a neighbor's lawn. A GLOWING NATIVITY SCENE lights him up. He takes his shoes off. He loads the SHELL into the Remington. He looks down at the plastic Baby Jesus:

WALT
Ya got off easy.

He crams the shotgun barrel in his mouth. His toe finds the trigger. Muzzle roar. A jerk/a flop. Blood sprays the wise men.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (SERVICE DOOR / LAUNDRY ROOM) - NIGHT

Fred grapples Elmer; their feet slip in Fred's blood. Fred weakens. His arms droop. He tries to rally/scream. It comes out a thin keen. Elmer pulls free. Fred blood-smears-slides down the side of one of the dryers.

From his dying place on the floor, Fred watches Elmer collect his weapon, straighten his bow-tie; Elmer's face is all care-worn concern:

ELMER
I'll cry at your funeral.

Fred manages a last look up; tears scorch out; his glasses slip; he tries to talk; he spits out blood; he fucking grins:

FRED
End-of-watch--

Elmer shoots him. Pistol roar blanks out Fred's last words.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN (TRAVELING) - NIGHT

Dwight drives. Pops Bennies. Revelers drift into the street with Roman Candles. Dwight swerves. Jumps the curb. VW shudders and stalls.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (9TH FLOOR HALLWAY) - NIGHT

Elevator opens. Elmer steps out into the hall. He goes to Room 901, draws his pistol and knocks.

A HIPPIE DUDE opens up; Elmer peers past him; hippie central; weed/guitars/wine.

HIPPIE

Lookin' for a party, pops?

ELMER

I'm sorry. I have the wrong room.

Hippie shrugs. Elmer goes to room 902. He knocks.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Dwight tilts out of the VW: Strippers on top of cars. A burning pile of Nixon Halloween masks. Pachuco gangsters battle Black Panthers. Arthur Blessit lugs his cross. Vietnam Vet amputees whiz by on skate-boards waving American flag sparklers. Hell's Angels thrash hippies with pool cues.

Black-and-white rolls up. Riot cops pop tear gas. Panthers and Pachucos team up temporary. They flip over the black-and-white. They scream: "GESTAPO!" Firework flare lights up tear gas; purple haze whipsaws revelers into wraiths; Dwight charges through gagging confetti out his nose.

Fireworks rip scream-holes in the sky. Reveler-roar *BUILDS*.

A street-corner re-enactment of the TATE SLAYINGS: Faux Manson groupie chicks chant "Charlie, Charlie"; over a faux-pregnant Sharon Tate. A fake knife guts her. Groupies pull her knees apart, yank out a ketchup-spattered plastic BABY DOLL.

Groupies begin to cut swastikas into each other's foreheads;

A CHARLES MANSON LOOK-A-LIKE rises up from the sidewalk abattoir, his gone-eyes land on Dwight:

"CHARLES MANSON"

Join us...

Dwight *SCREAMS*, pulls the Colt, fires into the air, scatters the Manson wannabes; he bludgeons a path through; a Citibank CLOCK lit up by the fireworks: **11:47 PM**.

EXT. ESPERANZA HOTEL - CONTINUOUS

Tear-gas clears: Dwight's at the Esperanza. He sees the UNMARKED F-CAR. He moves around to the service entrance.

EXT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909/BALCONY) - NEXT

Kathy, watching fireworks. Next building over: A NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY rages; a LITTLE GIRL IN A FAIRY COSTUME left alone on the balcony; Kathy waves; the girl smiles and waves back.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (LAUNDRY ROOM) - NEXT

Dwight comes in/gun up. He sees Fred. He goes to him. He holds him. Their foreheads touch.

Dwight eases Fred back down; he closes Fred's eyes.

DWIGHT
End-of-watch.

He gently pushes Fred's glasses back up his nose.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (9TH FLOOR HALLWAY) - NEXT

Elmer steps up to Room 909. He knocks on the door.

EXT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909/BALCONY) - NEXT

Kathy wheels around at the KNOCKING. Sees a shadow from under the door. Sees the knob twisting. And she KNOWS.

She looks: To her left: Room 908's BALCONY. Below it: A nine story drop.

Behind her: the door-frame shudders from Elmer's kick. She swings a leg over the railing, loses a shoe on 909's balcony; hoists herself up/over/reaches for 908's balcony rail--

--she misses; she grabs air; she glimpses the LITTLE GIRL in the fairy outfit waving goodbye; she grabs; she gets metal; she heaves herself up/over; she sprawls on 908's balcony.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOM 909) - NEXT

Door smashes open. Elmer comes in. Searches the room. The balcony. No one there. He holsters up. Starts to turn away. Sees: THE GIRL'S SHOE on the balcony.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (9TH FLOOR HALLWAY) - NEXT

Kathy comes out of Room 908. Elmer comes out of 909. They collide. Kathy trip-sprawls. She tries to crawl away.

ELMER

Can you hear it now, Kathy?

She claws carpet; she belly-writhes.

ELMER (CONT'D)

Can you hear your Die Song?

Elmer's standing above her. He raises his pistol. He sights her face.

ELMER (CONT'D)

I wish I had time for something
more personal. But this will have
to do for us both.

Kathy shuts her eyes. DING. ELEVATOR DOORS SLIDE OPEN --
DWIGHT'S RIGHT THERE EYE TO EYE WITH ELMER.

They shoot the same time; Dwight's shot misses; Elmer's shot
doesn't --Dwight falls in a heap in the elevator.

A DOOR BANGS OPEN at the end of the hallway; Elmer sees Kathy
run through it. Door swings shut: *Roof Access Only*.

ELMER

One more verse.

EXT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOFTOP) - NEXT

Kathy crouch-runs across the roof. Fireworks back-scatter
flames across the sky. She ducks behind a duct.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (9TH FLOOR HALLWAY) - NEXT

Elevator doors ding, start to slide shut. DWIGHT'S BALLED
AND BLOODY FIST SLAMS DOWN ON THE TRACK, STOPPING THEM.

EXT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOFTOP) - NEXT

Elmer steps out of the roof access doorway; looks around.

INT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (9TH FLOOR HALLWAY) - NEXT

Dwight drags himself down the hallway. He's blacking out; he bangs his head on the floor to stay conscious.

DWIGHT

No, no, no, no, please, no

EXT. ESPERANZA HOTEL (ROOFTOP) - NIGHT

Elmer hears a scraping sound from behind a duct.

ELMER

You can't hide. I hear you like
I've always heard you.
Your die song is a beacon. You'll
hear it, too. I promise you will.

He steps around the duct. Nobody there. KATHY comes from his blind-side, swinging the REBAR, slicing his face. She swings again; Elmer side-steps. He's on her.

KATHY

Offa me, bastard--

ELMER

Don't you know it, even now? Can't
you hear it? Your whole life has
been prologue to this moment. My
life, too. Darkness and then a
chorus of angels to sing you home.

He chokes her. He smiles/cries at the same time. His face is war-painted with blood. Her arms fall. She's fading.

ELMER

Your soul to keep...

Her eyes flutter shut.

DWIGHT (O.S.)

Legion Gringo.

Elmer wheels around, Kathy his shield, his eyes on the man standing in the roof access doorway:

DWIGHT MUELLER: trembling under the weight of mere consciousness; only the bloody wreckage of a man remains; his beat-dog eyes blaze righteous fury; his ringing voice shot through with shattered nobility and PURPOSE.

DWIGHT (CONT'D)
That name mean anything to you?

ELMER
That name *is* me.

DWIGHT
I know it. And I know you killed those whores. And Fred. And Vicky. And God knows how many else. But No More.

ELMER
You led me right to her. I knew you wouldn't disappoint.

DWIGHT
Let her go.

ELMER
I can't do that.

DWIGHT
I'm not asking, old shoe.

ELMER
Don't play at a hero, Dwight. You never wore it very well. Drop your weapon.

DWIGHT
I do, you'll kill us both.

ELMER
You don't and I'll shoot her face off while you watch it happen.

Dwight sways; shock/blood loss/triple vision. Colt slips from his hand.

Elmer's .38 booms; Dwight shot through the pelvis; he's on the ground looking up; fireworks setting the stars on fire. Elmer stands above him, blotting out the sky.

DWIGHT
How could you, you lost a daughter--

*
*

ELMER

You lost my daughter.

*
*

DWIGHT

I tried to save her, you sick fuck.

*
*

ELMER

But you killed her instead.

*
*

(beat)

And that was when I knew: We couldn't save them. No matter how much we loved them. I learned that along time ago. I was a father, a One day, I woke up, and I wasn't there. I sought Another Way.

DWIGHT

The Die Song.

ELMER

A volume was found in a Vice bust you and Kohner made in '52. He booked it as collateral evidence and forgot about it. It sat in a box under the P.A.B. for eight years. When you killed Moran, I had to show cause to prevent your indictment for murder. In reviewing your arrest reports, I came across The Die Song. In an old box, in a forgotten file, I found my destiny.

(beat)

In her way, Jane made us both.

DWIGHT

--how many?

ELMER

What's that, now?

*
*
*

DWIGHT

How many have you done, while you called yourself a cop?

*
*
*

ELMER

I think I was born this way; the badge just made it easier.

(beat)

Besides, I would never kept count. It seemed a vanity to keep count. To slight them like that.

DWIGHT
They all matter--

ELMER
--or none of them do.

Dwight snarls, rears up, Elmer toes his shot collar bone;
Dwight screams/falls back down.

ELMER (CONT'D)
Enough of that, now. Just let the
darkness take you; take you all the
way down. Down to the dark. To
all your waiting dead. To Jane.

DWIGHT
Her name sounds like shit in your
mouth.

ELMER
I can hear it now, Dwight. Your
Die Song. For one so coarse, it's
actually pretty sweet.

Dwight's eyes flutter shut; hot tears spring out.

ELMER (CONT'D)
Can you hear it? I want you, of
all people, to hear it. To
understand. To understand what I
do.

Screams of REVELERS as they start the COUNTDOWN:

REVELERS (O.S.)
Ten...

ELMER
What I am.

REVELERS (O.S.)
Nine...

ELMER
Do you hear your Die Song?

REVELERS (O.S.)
Eight...

DWIGHT
...yes

REVELERS (O.S.)

Seven...

ELMER

You hear it?

REVELERS (O.S.)

Six...

DWIGHT

I hear it.

REVELERS (O.S.)

Five...

Elmer kneels; lays a soothing hand over Dwight's heart.

ELMER

Then you're ready.

REVELERS (O.S.)

Four...

Dwight opens his eyes. They lock with Elmer's.

DWIGHT

No.

REVELERS (O.S.)

Three...

ELMER

No, what?

REVELERS (O.S.)

Two...

DWIGHT

I don't hear mine.

REVELERS (O.S.)

One...

ELMER

Then, whose?

Dwight's hand grips Elmer's neck, pulls him last-rites close:

DWIGHT

Yours.

DWIGHT PLUNGES FRED'S SWITCHBLADE INTO ELMER'S HEART.

REVELERS (O.S.)
 ...HAPPY NEW YEAR...

Dwight wrenches the knife in; blood pumps as Elmer spasms out. He dies looking surprised. Dwight shrugs Elmer's body off; Kathy comes over to Dwight; they huddle and hold on. 1970 rides in on reveler's roar. The sky awash in royal fire. Ashes all around.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Next bus idles Dwight and Kathy, cleaned up; she's fidgeting, hunting for cigarettes.

KATHY
 You don't have to see me off, you know. You can just leave.

DWIGHT
 I'm already here.

KATHY
 You gonna run alongside? Blow me kisses and say *bon voyage*?

DWIGHT
 I guess not.

She finds a smoke; her hands are shaking; he lights it for her; his hands are shaking, too. She sees it. Dwight jams them in his pockets.

KATHY
 I'm sorry about your friend.

DWIGHT
 He died going forward. That means something.

Driver honks the horn. Marines shipping out to Pendleton and Vietnam-bound hug their folks goodbye.

KATHY
 Thanks, for just, thanks for finding me.

DWIGHT
 You're welcome.

KATHY
 And thanks for the ticket and everything.

DWIGHT

You're welcome.

KATHY

Could you...could I get a little
more?

Beat.

DWIGHT

More what?

KATHY

Some more money.

DWIGHT

For what?

KATHY

Just, for whatever, you know?

A moment.

DWIGHT

Do you mean for the ride?

KATHY

Yeah, for the ride.

He skims some c-notes; she takes them. Bus honks last-call;
she turns to get on it. A last look back:

KATHY

Hey:

DWIGHT

Hey?

KATHY

Happy New Year?

DWIGHT

Jury's out.

She gets on the bus; doors accordion shut. Bus rolls away.
Dwight shit-kicks some spent firecrackers into the gutter.

He has a long pull of Romilar; he kills the bottle.

INT. ST. VIBIANA'S CATHEDRAL - DUSK

*

Dwight shoulders his way through the big wooden doors; he takes a seat at a pew in the back and fumbles open a new bottle of Romilar CF cough syrup.

*

*

*

WHORE (O.S.)
They're pretty.

*

*

A very young WHORE slides in beside him.

*

DWIGHT
What is?

*

*

She points up to the stained glass windows; all the Bible scenes.

*

*

WHORE
The glass, all the colors.

*

*

Dwight nods.

*

DWIGHT
They're beautiful.

*

*

WHORE
I don't know what the pictures
...but I like the colors. That's
why I come here.
(beat)
Why do you come here?

*

*

*

*

*

DWIGHT
A friend brought me here one time.
(beat)
I don't know why.

*

*

*

*

WHORE
So you're all alone.

*

*

DWIGHT
I guess so.

*

*

WHORE
You wanna feel less alone?

*

*

DWIGHT
You think you can do that?

*

*

WHORE
I do it all the time.

*

*

Dwight looks away; looks up at the stained glass; he absently
rubs the crook of his arm. *

WHORE
Can I ask you something? *

Dwight looks back to her. *

WHORE (CONT'D)
You think I look like Jane Fonda? *

DWIGHT
Nah, I don't see it. *

WHORE
No? *

She droops; she's crestfallen; she's just a girl. *

DWIGHT
I see Grace Kelly. *

WHORE
No foolin'? *

DWIGHT
I worked red carpet security for
High Noon. *

WHORE
You *met* her? *

DWIGHT
I held a door for her. *

WHORE
Did she say anything? *

Dwight cracks open the Romilar and takes a long pull. *

DWIGHT
No. But she smiled. *

End.