



**OVER BLACK**

TAPE SOUNDS... CRACKLES OF ELECTRICITY... *TSSSSSS...*

**EXT. WATERFRONT - OCONEE RIVER, GEORGIA - LATE NIGHT**

CLOUDS and silhouetted BIRDS spiral across a moonlit sky.

A MAN builds a BONFIRE along the trembling waters of this river shoreline amidst a lush, lowland forest...

**We don't see his face completely...** only glimpses for now.

KNOWLES'S VOICE

This is a story for people who follow  
their hearts and make their own  
rules...

The Man peels his clothes... into the FIRE they go. *WHUMPH!*  
*FLAMES FLARE, HISS...* reveal they're torn... **blood-smattered.**

KNOWLES'S VOICE (CONT'D)

People who get special pleasure out of  
doing something well, even if it's  
only for themselves...

**HIS POV:** Items burning... wallets, hotel keys, driver's  
licenses, receipts, state maps, postcards, business cards...

KNOWLES'S VOICE (CONT'D)

People who know there's more to living  
than meets the eye.

**FROM AFAR,** naked, he looks like ancient man... feral and  
primordial, offering up sacrifices to pagan gods on high.

KNOWLES'S VOICE (CONT'D)

I've had the chance to influence many  
folks along my journey. Show something  
of the truth I've seen. That sweet old  
couple in Nevada for instance...

**FLASH TO:** IN A TRAILER, the bound, bloated CORPSES of an  
ELDERLY COUPLE, riddled with stabs, gunshots. **FLIES BUZZ...**

KNOWLES'S VOICE (CONT'D)

... or that power company fellas in  
Ohio. Boy, was he a talker...

**FLASH TO:** A FOGGY FOREST... in the clearing a limp, NAKED MAN  
tied to a boulder like Prometheus, neck SMASHED --

KNOWLES'S VOICE (CONT'D)

... that hitchhiking gal in Texas. She  
was crazy about the Beatles... *all you  
need is love, love...*

**FLASH TO:** The body of a YOUNG WOMAN, White Album tee, tangled in a BARBED WIRE FENCE at edge of a CATTLE FIELD, eyes open.

Nearby, COYOTES yip and circle, eyes aglow in the dusk...

BACK TO:

#### THE BONFIRE

The Man obscured by SMOKE, RAGING FLAMES...

KNOWLES'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
My whole life was pointed in this  
direction. Just fate really...

He rushes towards the water now -- *SPLASH!*

IN THE WATER, the ghostly outline of the MAN as he twists, turns in the surrounding darkness... eddies of breath... his movements are lyrical, a BLACK & WHITE filmstrip in motion...

KNOWLES'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
I'm just a good 'ol fashioned American  
success story.

The B&W IMAGES shift... various FACES bubbling up around him... the B&W STILLS OF CRIME SCENE PHOTOS... the **VICTIMS**...

In DEEP WATER, we HEAR the *THUMP, THUMP* of his HEARTBEAT --

#### ABOVE WATER

The Man resurfaces... gasping breaths... his head bobbing above moonlit waters. Can see the fire along the shoreline...

As he swims off... for a moment it almost appears as if he's WALKING ON THE WATER AS HE RISES ON TO THE SHORE...

#### SERIES OF SHOTS

-- DAWN. The Man in **fresh clothes**. Pours whiskey from a bottle on the bonfire's stray embers... *SSSSSS...*

-- A WHITE 74' CHEVY IMPALA parked under a willow tree. Sleek. Custom. He wipes it down meticulously with a rag, even the rims. Squeezes the water into a bucket...

... and the bucket *DRIP, DRIP, DRIPS* water into the muddy earth below... seeping with writhing EARTHWORMS...

-- UNSCREWS the OHIO LICENSE PLATE from the Impala's BUMPER. Rifles a set he's carrying in the trunk: Texas, Florida, Alabama, Connecticut... fastens on a **New Mexico plate**.

STOPS just before closing the trunk. listens. Trees swaying, insect thrums... BIRD WINGS... a SHAPE DIVING FROM ABOVE --

A strangely-patterned SEAGULL lands on nearby STUMP. Magnificent. Inordinate. It's feathers *shimmer*.

They stare into each other.

HE SLAMS the trunk ending and we're --

**EXT. FOREST - U.S. HWY 80 - GEORGIA - EARLY MORNING**

VRRROOM! The Impala roars down an empty HIGHWAY, a great white predator on wheels. Pines fence the horizon darkly.

The Man, a silhouette at the wheel, AM RADIO buzzing, cig glowing in a SIDEVIEW MIRROR.

KNOWLES'S VOICE  
News of some of my success has  
followed me out there...

UP AHEAD, a **FEMALE HITCHHIKER**, a pale, freckled beauty, 13 but trying real hard to be 18, in bell-bottoms, tee knotted above her stomach, orange yarn ties in her pigtails.

The Man pulls over. She breaks into a smile, climbs in.

**INT. TWILLY'S COFFEE SHOP - MACON, GEORGIA - MORNING**

The Man at a COUNTER in a Mesh cap, back to us. Finishing breakfast, sipping coffee. With scissors, CLIPS an AP article, folds it discreetly into a MOTTLED BROWN BRIEFCASE.

INSIDE... more ARTICLES, a worn copy of '*Jonathan Livingston Seagull*' and something familiar... orange yarn ties.

KNOWLES'S VOICE  
No matter where I go, I hear people  
talking...

ABOVE THE COUNTER, a B&W MAGNAVOX TV plays the news. LOCAL ANCHORS report next to a GRAPHIC: **MURDER IN MILLEDGEVILLE**.

And he's not the only one watching... the WAITRESSES, FAMILIES in booths, TRUCKERS on stools...

KNOWLES'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
Not knowing I'm right there among  
them... wearing the mask of them.

HEARS their whispers. Their theories. Their dreads.

THROUGH THE WINDOW, he disappears with his briefcase.

**EXT. ZAYRE DEPARTMENT STORE - MACON, GEORGIA - MORNING**

AT THE COUNTER, the Man, chatting up the pretty, SALES CLERK with a shopping bag. Flirty as hell. He signs a sales slip.

**E./I. IMPALA - MOVING - LATE MORNING**

The car's white REFLECTION GLIDES across STOREFRONTS, WINDOW DISPLAYS. Along sidewalks, PEOPLE cross back and forth --

KNOWLES'S VOICE  
Sad truth is most people out there  
just wanna be one'a the crowd. They're  
beyond help. I mean look at 'em...

FACES IN THE CROWD... all AGES... walking, talking...

KNOWLES'S VOICE (CONT'D)  
They stroll around in a slumber,  
asleep when they think they're awake.  
From womb to tomb, they've never met  
themselves, never really been alive a  
day in their life.

The Impala cruises to a stop along a curb...

KNOWLES'S VOICE (**TAPE RECORDER**)  
That used to be me. Not anymore. For  
the first time, I am alive...

CLOSE ON: his finger hits STOP on a Panasonic RQ CASSETTE RECORDER... we realize HE'S BEEN LISTENING TO HIS VOICE ON THE CASSETTE RECORDER THE ENTIRE OPENING.

Casually hits REWIND... SCHWEEEE -- STOP. PLAY again --

KNOWLES'S VOICE (TAPE RECORDER) (CONT'D)  
... the first time, I am alive...  
(rewind; play)  
... I am alive...  
(rewind; play)  
... **I AM ALIVE...**

STOP. Silence. Hits RECORD. Speaks into the attached MIC:

KNOWLES (INTO RECORDER)  
It's only a matter of time before they  
catch on to what I'm doing. Until then  
my work continues. Nothing can stop  
me. The only question now is...

IN SIDEVIEW MIRROR: His eyes HUNT OUT FACES IN THE CROWD...

KNOWLES (INTO RECORDER) (CONT'D)  
... Who's next?

Hits STOP. Pulls the tape, slides it into a MANILA ENVELOPE addressed to **SHELDON YAVITZ**. A Coral Gables, FL address.

**EXT. STREET - DOWNTOWN MACON, GEORGIA - DAY**

Drops the package into a CITY MAILBOX. As the lid closes, we PULL BACK TO REVEAL THE MAN FULLY FOR THE FIRST TIME --

**PAUL JOHN KNOWLES.** 28. Wrangler jacket, jeans, alligator skin boots. Rugged good looks that remind us all devils were once angels and glorious in the eyes of their maker. Tall shock of hair the hue of Kentucky Bourbon, thin mustache.

Blazes a Kool. Looks right at us. A slight grin. Stalks off.

REVVS the Impala... LURCHES from the curb and --

SLAM TO BLACK:

## HANDSOME STRANGER

City SOUNDS drifting upward...

### EXT. HOLIDAY INN HOTEL - ATLANTA - ESTABLISHING - DUSK

A modernist, multi-story wedge. Dark windows. Lonely, lamplit windows. Windows strangers gaze out everyday, including --

**SANDY FAWKES.** A silhouette against the glass of a LOW STORY, cradling a Gitanes cig. Exhales... like a lepidopterist's prized moth gazing back at us from behind its display case.

DOWNTOWN ATLANTA, NOVEMBER 7TH, 1974

SANDY (PRE-LAP)  
(British accent)  
Sandy Fawkes...

### INT. SANDY'S HOTEL SUITE - HOLIDAY INN - DUSK

Sandy on the phone, smoking, unclasping an ankle-aching heel. 40, but projects younger. Definitely dresses younger. Gritty, yet glam. A Fleet Street journalist who's learned how match the lads pint-for-pint though she's never quite fit in.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
... F-A-W-K-E-S. Like the mask, not  
the mammal.  
(undoes other heel;  
listens)  
I'm with the Enquirer now but mostly  
U.K. pubs -- the Daily Express, the  
Telegraph. Mm-hmm. I'm trying to do a  
little background on a subject. How  
late is your cuttings library open?  
(sits on bed; listens)  
The Atlanta-Journal Constitution  
doesn't have a cuttings library?  
(listens)  
Ah. That's the one. **Research center.**  
Brilliant. Mmm, perhaps a fellow  
journalist can spare an evening to  
show a colleague around?  
(checks the time)  
No, I understand. When's it close?  
(MORE)

SANDY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
 (scribbles a note)  
 Thanks for your help. Bye, now.

Plops the phone on its cradle. Exasperated. Stubs her cig out in an ashtray next to a Gideon Bible on the night stand.

**The room.** Meet the Bible-belt version of corporate bland. Posted notices about: NO ALCOHOL IN ROOMS. For fucksakes...

**EXT. CARR RESIDENCE - MILLEDGEVILLE, GEORGIA - NIGHT**

A pleasant neighborhood of fenceless, single-family HOMES. Crime is strictly a "news" phenomenon. But tonight there's --

COMMOTION. Clusters of POLICE CRUISERS, FIRE DEPARTMENT/EMT vehicles. Startled NEIGHBORS in bathrobes, pjs, huddle around elm trees, on porches. Dogs BARK from houses nearby --

**MILLEDGEVILLE, GEORGIA**

**COLEMAN** (O.S.)  
 Wife came home, found 'em...

**THE HOUSE.** Door ajar. A pair of ominous lights on inside.

The speaker, DEPUTY CLIFF COLEMAN, 25, Eagle Scout demeanor, surveys the scene with his boss, **POLICE CHIEF JED OSBORNE**, late 40s, flecks of grey, half-asleep and newly arrived --

**COLEMAN** (CONT'D)  
 ... Ellen Carr, she's a night nurse at Piedmont Henry, up in Stockbridge.

Osborne glances over at **ELLEN CARR**, 30s, in nurse's UNIFORM, in an AMBULANCE with EMTs. Traumatized.

**OSBORNE**  
 I've seen her around... My daughter's high school. She call it in?

**COLEMAN**  
 (shakes his head)  
 Neighbors. Coupla of 'em went in the residence, confirmed it.  
 (then)  
 One was throwing up out here when I pulled up.

**OSBORNE**  
 (to nearby DEPUTIES)  
 Make sure the Coroner to has a clear path --  
 (to Coleman)  
 C'mon... let's have look...

**INT. CARR RESIDENCE - FOYER/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

*CRUNCH!* Osborne and Coleman stepping over glass puddles...

Some cataclysm of rage in here. FURNITURE upturned, cupboards open, drawers flung. Curtains are slashed, sofas gouged.

Coleman crouches, lifts an upturned LAMP... light falls on...

... a **FAMILY PORTRAIT**. On the wall: *The Carrs. Family of 3. Smiles, Sunday best. The DAUGHTER seems awkward, shy.*

IN THE KITCHEN

Osborne inspects the DOOR. No signs of forced entry. Between the CURTAIN, sees the ghostly FACES OF NEIGHBORS peering in.

IN THE HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Both make their way down the darkened hallway into...

**INT. MANDY'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

Osborne flicks the light on. Posters. Dolls and stuffed animals. Girlish knick knacks and on the BED --

MANDY CARR. 15. Frail body face down, her dark hair matted to the pillow. Legs and feet bound with electrical cords to the BED POSTS... a lone pink sock on one foot and a...

... bright AFGHAN across her body. Osborne gapes at it.

OSBORNE

Was she covered when you found her?

COLEMAN

Uh... it seemed inappropriate for her to be exposed like that.

OSBORNE

*Take it off. For Chrissakes, Cliff, y'know better than that. Go on --*

COLEMAN

Sorry, Boss --

Coleman yanks the afghan, revealing Mandy in a tee, nude from the waist down, her spidery legs tingling scabiosa...

Osborne crouches across from MANDY'S FACE. Her EYES OPEN, raised to the whites, the sclera. A nylon stocking knotted around her throat and...

*CLICK.* Osborne's Maglite. Something dark between her teeth...

OSBORNE

There's something in her mouth.

COLEMAN

Yeah, I didn't wanna look too close.

Osborne pulls a pen, uses it to prod about...

OSBORNE  
 It's a stocking... like the one she's  
 been strangled with.  
 (stands)  
 Probably to keep her from screaming.  
 'S why the neighbors didn't hear.

**INT. CARR RESIDENCE - MASTER BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

The gruesome sight of CARSWELL CARR, 45, naked, atop a king-sized bed, hands and feet also bound to the posts with cords. Duct tape along his eyes, mouth. But there's also --

PUNCTURE WOUNDS... all over his back, waist, thighs... blood pooled like dried sap... an archipelago of splatter.

OSBORNE  
 Think we're looking at two suspects minimum. The ransacking, the binding, killing in separate rooms, that's a lotta manpower.

COLEMAN  
 Could be they walked in on a burglary and panicked.

OSBORNE  
 Except there's no signs of forced entry.

*KNOCK, KNOCK.* In the DOORWAY, the **CORONER**, 50s, hillbilly stout, natty attire, dragging a leather satchel. Sweaty. FORENSIC TECHS trail lugging CAMERAS, EQUIPMENT.

CORONER  
 Sorry, I'm tardy, Jed. S'dozing off a helluva hangover at my cabin in Juliette when Dispatch rang.

OSBORNE  
 (humoring him)  
 Fall fishin' trip, yeah?

CORONER  
 Some fishin'. Think the bass were tipped off, fled the scene.  
 (motions)  
 Guess we'll start here. All this havoc, we're bound to pull a print off somethin', least a partial...  
 (to Techs)  
 And don't gimme any guff about dust -- use ninhydrin.

The Techs are nonplussed, used to his nitpicking. The Coroner snaps on some plastic gloves, approaches the body.

CORONER (CONT'D)  
 My preliminary assessment is we can rule out natural causes...  
 (chuckles; re: a wound)  
 (MORE)

CORONER (CONT'D)

Mmm. These are shallow...  
 (prods with his finger)  
 Maybe a short flathead. Sharp enough  
 to make an impact. Blunt enough for  
 maximum pain.

COLEMAN

(to Osborne)  
 Maybe some kinda sicko, eh Boss?

OSBORNE

Wouldn't go that far just yet.

CORONER

Nuff a'these would be incentive to be  
 forthcomin' about, say, the location  
 of hidden valuables.

OSBORNE

Fits with the binding pattern but  
 still...

(to Coleman)  
 C'mon. Let's give 'em room to work...

THE KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Osborne and Coleman taking notes, comparing --

COLEMAN

(re: Coroner)  
 Fishin' my ass. Least he has an excuse  
 to be drunk this time.

OSBORNE

He's an elected official, my hands are  
 tied. But once his team wraps and the  
 bodies are moved, bring Mrs. Carr into  
 the residence, make a list of all  
 missing items. Be extra thorough.

COLEMAN

You think she can handle that?

OSBORNE

We have to try. If we're lucky we'll  
 be able to flag something down the  
 line. If it's a crew just passing  
 through, then we're already grasin'  
 at straws.

THROUGH THE CURTAINS, Ellen Carr still in the AMBULANCE.

**INT. ATLANTA-JOURNAL CONSTITUTION RESEARCH CENTER - NIGHT**

Like a hospital. Halogen-bright. Antiseptic.

Sandy at a LARGE TABLE making notes. Lights a cig --

NEARBY CLERK

Ma'am, there's no smoking in the  
 Research Center.

Points at a posted PLACARD. Like she's on fucking yard duty.

SANDY  
... Right.

Stubs her cig out. The Clerk glares at her.

NEARBY CLERK  
And we're closing in 15.

**INT. HOLIDAY INN HOTEL - BASEMENT BAR LOUNGE - NIGHT**

A place for meeting strangers and being a stranger. A JUKEBOX croons Allman Brothers country.

Sandy at the bar. Snug in a fresh cardigan, jeans. A Scotch warming her over. Habitually takes in the dim lit FACES...

Mostly SALESMEN-types. Fading hair, buffalo necks stuffed in off-the-rack Brooks Brothers. Sales all day, dining strangers every night. Some drinking away demons they cannot name.

Here comes one now, bowling ball belly, three juleps in --

SALESMAN  
Buy'a drink, sweetheart?

SANDY  
(oh boy)  
'M fine, thank you. I'm just having the one to wind down, and I'm off.

SALESMAN  
What's the accent ya got there?

SANDY  
British.

SALESMAN  
Uh-huh. 'S what I thought. A Union Jacker.

SANDY  
A what?

SALESMAN  
There's a Union Jack on yer flag.  
Hence, "Union Jacker"...

Only the Salesman slides a chair over, plops down --

SANDY  
(annoyed now)  
Oh, please, have a seat.

SALESMAN  
Let's play a game of questions --

SANDY  
Oh, let's not --

SALESMAN  
Here's the first one --

SANDY (CONT'D)  
How long've you been married?

SALESMAN (CONT'D)  
Oh, about 10 years or --  
(*oh shit*)  
-- er, what I meant --

SANDY  
-- is that you should probably be  
running along. Maybe phone the little  
lady, see how she's keeping up.

The jukebox drops a track. The Bee Gees: *THE GREATEST MAN IN THE WORLD*'. A drunken COUPLE stumble out to the floor badly.

It's at that awkward moment when Sandy catches sight of --

**KNOWLES.** Just off the Salesman's shoulder, down the BAR.

Stands out in this crowd. Angular looks. Stylish threads.  
Green suede jacket, flower-patterned shirt, and tie.

Their eyes MEET. Time SLOWS. The music spikes. Currents of chemistry flow between them.

SALESMAN  
-- yer a real cunt, anyone ever tell  
you that?

The Salesman snaps her reverie, pissed she's ignoring him --

SANDY  
Is that all you have in that little  
nitwit skull of yours? A four-letter  
insult -- why is that not surprising?  
This cunt's closed as far as you're  
concerned.  
(he blinks)  
You can fuck off now. Go on. Be speedy  
about it.

The Salesman stammers, shuffles off in a huff. Spell broken,  
Sandy downs her drink. Done with it. *Just done.*

KNOWLES (O.S.)  
You handled that well. Was just about  
to come rescue you.

He's even better up close. Smoky eyes. An easy grin. Thin  
mustache. Smells good too. She won't let on. Not even close.

SANDY  
I look like your idea of a damsel in  
distress? In need of rescuing?

KNOWLES  
Not quite, no.

SANDY  
 So this is just your opening then?  
 Needs some work.

Fishes another Gitane from her handbag. Takes her time, let's the awkward silence linger. Pokes one from the pack, and he's already there with a Zippo, lighting it --

KNOWLES  
 Care to dance?

Motions at the near empty dance floor. Sandy nearly bursts out laughing at the absurdity of his request.

SANDY  
 I don't think so. I'm hardly tempted to be the life of *this* party. Besides, I have to be up early tomorrow.

KNOWLES  
 How about another drink -- Bell's whisky and water, right?  
 (sets down a drink)  
 I asked the bartender.

She smiles. Nicely played.

SANDY  
 Sure. One drink then.

They sit. **NOTE:** Knowles will be now be known as --

KNOWLES/DARYL  
 Lester. Lester Daryl Golden.  
 My friends call me L.D.

SANDY  
 I can't call you all that, can I?  
 We've only just met. How about I just call you, **Daryl**? A nice handsome name, it suits you well.

DARYL  
 (considers)  
 Sure. I'd like that.

SANDY  
 Wonderful. I'm Sandy.

DARYL  
 I noticed you earlier. In the lobby.  
 You're a reporter from London.

SANDY  
 That's right. I didn't notice you.  
 (playful)  
 Stalking around after me, that it?

DARYL  
 No, nothing like that. You were asking the receptionist for directions to the Atlanta-Journal Constitution Building.

SANDY

Oh, yes. Well, you'll be happy to know I found it. It's much more exciting in print than in person.

DARYL

I could've shown you.

SANDY

You know your way 'round? If you're staying here, I assume you'd be just as clueless on the subject of the local longitudes and latitudes.

DARYL

I know a few, but you're right, I'm not from around here. I'm from Santa Fe. How long you staying here?

SANDY

You ask a lot of questions for someone who only just introduced himself.

DARYL

You can ask me anything you want.

SANDY

But I haven't, have I?  
(off his look)  
Surprise me. Tell me something about you.

DARYL

(considers)  
I learned a magic trick recently.  
Would you like to see?

SANDY

You've been saving this magic spiel for just the right moment to spring on unsuspecting divorcees and barmaids, haven't you?

DARYL

Actually, I've only performed it once and not in front of anyone. There's a 70% chance it's a complete disaster.

SANDY

Oh, you want a prize if it comes off, s'that it?

DARYL

If it's a success, you let me take you to dinner.

SANDY

As in tonight?

DARYL

As in *why not?* Aren't you hungry?

SANDY

I'm positively ravenous and could eat  
a race horse if you served it med rare  
with a nice Cab Franc, but go ahead.  
Dazzle me.

DARYL

Hand me your pack of cigarettes.  
(off her look)  
You'll see in a minute.

She hands the pack of Gitanes from her purse.

DARYL (CONT'D)

French... exquisite taste.  
(off her shrug)  
Here's what I'm going to do. I'm going  
to tie this cigarette...  
(pulls one from the pack)  
... into a knot without ripping or  
tearing it.

SANDY

Like for your tennis shoes?

DARYL

Exactly.

SANDY

Now this I've got to see.

He clears a space. Uses the pack's cellophane packaging... sleeves it around the cigarette methodically... then ties it deftly into a knot, much to Sandy's disbelief. She CLAPS.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Bloody hell... where'd you learn to do  
that?

He unfurls it, flames it with his Zippo. Takes a long drag...

SANDY (CONT'D)

You owe me a fag -- cigarette -- by  
the way.

DARYL

I know what it means. And you owe me  
dinner. I'm buying.

**EXT. HOLIDAY INN HOTEL - PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER**

The Impala glides up, the engine a steady purr of restrained power. Daryl makes a theatrical show of opening her door.

SANDY

Aren't you the gentleman? I've never  
ridden in one of these before.

She notices the back seat's full of items, including CLOTHES draped on hangars in the back. Quite odd.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
It's like a wardrobe rack back there.

DARYL  
I haven't had time to take it all up  
to the room. I've been on the road  
awhile, things have piled up.

She accepts that. He whips them out of the lot --

**INT. POLYNESIAN RESTAURANT - DOWNTOWN ATLANTA - NIGHT**

Asian flair, Georgia-style. A surreal pastiche of Pan Asian kitsch: postcards of Polynesian beaches, Buddha statues, electric fountains, flower-haired WAITRESSES.

AT A TABLE by candlelight, Daryl and Sandy. Drinks, food.

DARYL  
Sure I've had some wild notions...  
when I was real young I wanted to  
knock off a few banks, become an  
outlaw bigger than John Dillinger.

SANDY  
Quite the romantic, Daryl. Not the  
least bit divorced from reality.  
(off his confusion)  
Dillinger met with a pretty violent  
end, didn't he?

DARYL  
Sure, but he became famous. *Legendary*.  
Like uh, a living God.

SANDY  
A dead god. Shot down in the street  
like a stray dog.

DARYL  
Yeah... I guess there's always a price  
to be paid.

SANDY  
You left out Houdini with your magic  
tricks.

DARYL  
Oh, that's just for kicks. Picked that  
up on the road when I was playing bass  
guitar in a band.

SANDY  
Musically-inclined too. Bravo, Daryl.  
(decides its OK)  
I was once married to a jazz musician.

DARYL  
Oh yeah?

SANDY  
A lifetime ago. You still play?

DARYL  
Not much...  
(deflects)  
You enjoy being a journalist?

SANDY  
Fleet Street has its ups and downs.  
Money can be spotty at times and you  
can have insufferable bores for bosses  
and colleagues who'd steal a story off  
your freshly fallen corpse, but other  
than that, it's utterly fabulous.

DARYL  
Sounds intense to me.

SANDY  
And dangerous too sometimes. I covered  
the Yom Kippur War for instance.

DARYL  
So you've seen... death.

SANDY  
Soldiers in the field. Motor bombings.  
Not up close. That sort of thing  
interest you?

DARYL  
No... just curious.

SANDY  
These days, it's features mostly.  
The Gossip trade.

DARYL  
People love to be busybodies.

SANDY  
Sure but they do pay handsomely. I  
nearly had Spiro Agnew in an interview  
at his Crofton hideaway this morning.  
S'just as well. Probably only uses it  
to bang his secretaries n'such.

He laughs. Can't help it.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
What... ?

DARYL  
You're just different's all.  
Different than any gal I've met.

SANDY  
Well, I'm not just some gal am I?  
Maybe just direct. I've been told  
that. I hope you don't mean *older*.  
(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)

That where you headed with this,  
Daryl? Way to flatter a lady.

DARYL

No, no, I mean, I enjoy your company.  
It's hard to find.

SANDY

You never mentioned what brings you to  
Atlanta. Not my idea of a vacation  
spot. Probably not anyone's if we're  
honest.

DARYL

My Old Man's tangled in a lawsuit here  
in civil court. Our family owns a  
small chain of restaurants.

SANDY

Crikey, I hope it's not serious.

(off his look)

How long it take to drive here from  
New Mexico?

DARYL

'Bout 9 days. Here, lemme show you --

Pulls a pen... scrawls on NAPKIN. Moments later, holds up a  
vivid, hand-sketched MAP of his route through various states.

SANDY

Well done, Daryl.

DARYL

I'm on my way to Miami now.

SANDY

That's funny, I'm headed to Miami  
tomorrow as well.

DARYL

You should let me drive you.

(off her look)

Only takes a day. It's a beautiful  
country. Can't see it from the air.

AT A NEARBY TABLE, a beefy BUSINESSMAN-type breaks his  
chopsticks. YELLS for a fork. They watch, bemused.

DARYL (CONT'D)

We should go dancing tonight.

SANDY

Oh you're on about that again. And I  
bet you know just the place.

PRE-LAP 'WATERLOO' by Abba --

**INT. DANCING LOUNGE - DOWNTOWN ATLANTA - NIGHT**

Vibrant CROWD. Grass and Harvey Wallbangers in here and...

... Daryl leading Sandy onto the DANCE FLOOR. Packed. GUYS in King collars, leather jackets. GIRLS with Motown puffs, bangs or bouffants, platforms, kaleidoscopic polyesters.

Sandy seems self-conscious amongst this unfamiliar crowd...

SANDY  
(shouts over the din)  
I better finish this --

Downs her drink, puts it on a ledge. *CRASH!* It slipped off --

DARYL  
Forget it, forget it. No big deal.

He lulls her to start dancing. Slowly, she follows suit.

Under the GLITTER BALL, it's not long before these two are moving in sync rhythmically -- bodies closer -- touching, if briefly -- colliding and parting, colliding and parting --

The song flips to 'SUGAR BABY LOVE' by The Rubettes and the CROWD ERUPTS, goes ape shit crazy --

They're moving faster... his white buckle shoes a blur, his body electric. The CROWD PARTS. Daryl is a man POSSESSED --

Sandy keeps up -- until she can't. Suddenly standing with everyone else, watching him perform, in his own world.

The song ends, the crowd's APPLAUDING, Sandy included --

NEARBY BLACK GUY  
Where's a white boy learn to dance  
like that?

**EXT. DISCO LOUNGE - BEHIND THE CLUB - NIGHT**

Sandy and Daryl by a wall railing, tipsy, blissed out. She shivers. He pulls his green coat around her shoulders.

DARYL  
Better?

SANDY  
Yes, it is... 'S a very nice jacket by the way. Suede brocade. I used to be a fashion editor. Where'd you get it?

DARYL  
A place in Santa Fe... they do custom.

SANDY  
It fits you well. Like a glove.  
Listen... good dancer or not, I'm not  
going to bed with you...  
(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)  
 (off his surprise)  
 I know you haven't asked, but it sure  
 isn't difficult to read your thoughts.  
 I have to hop on a plane to Florida  
 for this assignment tomorrow.

DARYL  
 Thought we decided I was driving you.

SANDY  
 Oh is that what you thought?

He leans in close... but she pushes him away.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
 Besides, I can't go around shagging  
 complete strangers, now can I? You  
 could be another Boston Strangler for  
 all I know.

Long beat. They both burst out laughing --

DARYL  
 You're in luck -- the Boston  
 Strangler's dead. Pretty sure of that.

SANDY  
 You have some very wicked people in  
 this country a'yours. We hear all  
 about it back in Britain.

DARYL  
 Every country has its monsters. Grow  
 them like crops in the soil. America  
 is no different. England had Jack the  
 Ripper.

SANDY  
 A century ago but I see your point.  
 (touches his upper lip)  
 How long have you had this mustache?

DARYL  
 'Bout a week. You like it?

SANDY  
 Mm-mm. Too bristly. It'll have to go  
 if we continue down this path.

He leans in... she backpedals... it's awkward but then she  
 succumbs... a KISS. And another... longer... slow burn and --

SOMEONE (O.S.)  
 GO AFTER IT, BRUTHA! WOO-HOO!

WHISTLES. WHOOPS. The outburst has Sandy aware in the lot --  
 lots of lounging KIDS, GAWKERS, coming and going.

SANDY  
 We should get back. We can't go around  
 giving shows for free now can we?

**INT. IMPALA - MOVING - DOWNTOWN ATLANTA - MINUTES LATER**

Cruising Atlanta streets, windows down, traffic empty. The horse power of the car, the velvety drone of '*NIGHTS IN WHITE SATIN*' by The Moody Blues on the radio. They exchange looks.

**INT. SANDY'S HOTEL SUITE - HOLIDAY INN - SHORTLY THEREAFTER**

Sandy on the edge of the bed, removing her earrings, jewelry. Eyes Daryl through the open BATHROOM DOOR...

IN THE MIRROR, their eyes meet. He pats shaving cream on his upper lip. Hefts a razor. Two swipes and its gone. Splashes.

She wanders up behind, hands him a towel. He dries his face. Her fingers flutter across his cheeks...

SANDY

Why, yes. That's more like it.

DARYL

You can kiss me now.

Both a playful order, and a soft command.

SANDY

I have your permission. Gladly.

Reaches her arms up beneath his, hands behind his back. A lingering kiss... a slow, melting burn. Leads him towards the bed, undressing them both --

IN THE DRESSER MIRROR, their bodies clasped, their hands moving over each other's bodies...

She leans on the dresser facing him. Peels off her stockings, aware of his eyes on her every movement. She's in control though now, performing. He's transfixed.

Tosses the stockings at his feet. Christian Dior, that's how she rolls. Undoes his pants, leads him to the bed.

Shoves him on his back. He smiles, enjoys the power reversal.

She walks over to the MINI-BAR area... returns with a bottle of bourbon. A quick swig. Then POURS some between his legs...

SANDY (CONT'D)

That should give you a bit of life.

He lets out a muffled *AHHH*, pulls her to him. They kiss passionately on the bed. He reaches over to the lamp, turns out the light, putting us in...

DARKNESS. Excited, desperate breathing... rustling, friction.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

The LIGHT SNAPS on. Sandy still. Daryl, looking defeated.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
 It happens, darling. We've both had a lot to drink.

DARYL  
 Maybe if we wait a bit --

SANDY  
 No, we're both completely knackered and have to be up in the morning. But I had a lot of fun this evening.

DARYL  
 (fighting shame)  
 Let's just wait a minute. I'll be OK.

SANDY  
 These things happen, darlin'. Look at this way: even after all my excuses, you got me into bed after all.

An awkward moment, but he smiles anyway.

**LATER**

Moonlight through the BALCONY WINDOWS. Sandy, asleep in bed.

IN THE BATHROOM, Daryl wets his neck. Glares down the MIRROR. Something terrible going on inside of him.

Hears... *whisper sounds*.... faint LAUGHTER.  
 Shuts off the light. *CREAKS* the door open.

Idles over Sandy asleep in the bed, head against her pillow.

He scoops Sandy's Dior stockings off the floor... stretches them between his clenched fists in the shape of a NOOSE...

Fights an urge... quickly wraps the stocking around his throat again and again... *pulls taught*... *tight*... *TIGHTER*...

CHOKING HIMSELF. His neck bulges, eyes water... he STUMBLES, breathing in hoarse rasps as he loses consciousness...

*THUDS* against the floor GASPING... nose running, tears, coughing, spasming. Turns on his back and --

UPSIDE DOWN POV: Sandy still asleep on the bed. Hasn't been disturbed. And that's when he hears, low, guttural laughter --

GUTTURAL VOICE  
 ... *pansy boy, that's what you get*...

A LOOMING SHADOW IN THE ROOM. A HUMAN SHAPE... making its way towards Daryl. It's missing an arm but the other is HUGE -- SWINGING DOWN with a LONG STRAP and we SLAM TO --

DARYL'S EYES OPENING

Naked, in the bathroom, stocking around his throat. Must've passed off. Takes it off. *VOMITS* in the toilet. Looks out.

Sandy, sleeping softly.

**INT. MILLEDGEVILLE POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - MORNING**

The BULLPEN of this small town station has never been busier. DEPUTIES, RINGING PHONES, COMMOTION. Everyone low on sleep, high on caffeine, adrenaline. Osborne hangs up a phone, grim.

NEARBY, **LIEUTENANT JAMES TULLY**, 40s, on his phone, NOTE PAD in hand gives Osborne an update --

LT. TULLY  
Coroner's confident the weapon used  
for Carswell Carr's stab wounds was a  
pair'a scissors they found. They're  
running forensics. 42 a'them total.

Somebody WHISTLES. Osborne *shhhs* him. Eyes a NEARBY HALL.

OSBORNE  
And prints?

LT. TULLY  
Nah. Like John the Baptist washed 'em  
in the Jordan himself. Point a'fact,  
they couldn't find a single usable  
print in the whole damn house.

OSBORNE  
Of course not.

LT. TULLY  
And Carr didn't die from the stab  
wounds. He had a massive heart attack  
during the torture.

**INTERVIEW ROOM 2**

Oddly quiet. Coleman at a TABLE across from Ellen Carr, still in her nurse's uniform, and a friend, **MS. CROWLEY**, 50s, her hand comfortingly on her arm. Both flipping --

PHOTO ALBUMS. Mementos from Ellen Carr's vanquished life before them. She's struggling to keep it together.

ELLEN CARR  
(points)  
This one. From our Ensenada trip.

She can't PULL the PHOTO from the plastic -- her hands are trembling. Ms. Crowley takes over, slides it to Coleman.

COLEMAN  
(takes it, jots notes)  
Now, I just need you to review the  
list of items on this page, make sure  
I didn't miss anything.

Ms. Crowley takes it for them to look over. The door opens and Osborne enters...

OSBORNE

Cliff, why don't you take, Miz Crowley outside, give her some air. I need to speak to Mrs. Carr a moment.

Coleman and Ms. Crowley exchange looks of concern.

ELLEN CARR

(to Ms. Crowley)  
I'll be OK.

Coleman leads Ms. Crowley out, not wanting to go. Door shuts.

OSBORNE

I can have an officer escort you home so you can pick up anything else you might need from your residence.

ELLEN CARR

No, keep your men for finding who did this.

OSBORNE

We found your husband's car. A State Trooper spotted it in a bar lot near Allentown. The Pegasus.

ELLEN CARR

I've never heard of it. Near Allentown, you say?

OSBORNE

Yes. The Pegasus is known as a bar frequented by certain... men.  
Homosexuals.

She takes in this news... a lightning bolt.

OSBORNE (CONT'D)

You know any reason for... maybe a friend a' Carswell's into that sorta lifestyle?

ELLEN CARR

Carswell told me he was done with all that.

OSBORNE

(taken aback)  
Did your husband usually go out when you were on the nightshift?

ELLEN CARR

(ignoring the question)  
It was just a phase. College fancy, nothing more. Is the... press going to hear about this?

OSBORNE

Hear about what?

ELLEN CARR

I want that detail kept out. I don't want people thinking we weren't happily married. We were.

OSBORNE

I'll do my best, ma'am, but --

ELLEN CARR

You can do better than that. My Carswell was a good husband, a great provider, a wonderful father. You'd know that if you were more involved in your daughter's life...

That was meant to land. But Osborne takes it in stride. She absentmindedly picks up one of the PHOTOS. Gazes at it.

ELLEN CARR (CONT'D)

He wasn't like his colleagues -- out screwing stewardesses after lobster-martini dinners on business trips. He helped Mandy with her homework after school. When he was away, he called every night. So yes. I think you can do better than that, Chief Osborne.

She drops the PHOTO defiantly. CLOSER... Carswell Carr with Ellen, friends on a beachfront patio...

... wearing a green suede jacket we recognize immediately.

INT. SANDY'S HOTEL SUITE - HOLIDAY INN - MORNING

Sandy suddenly awake. Bothered by a dream already fading...

Glances over at Daryl, sleeping peacefully beside her. Almost angelic in shafts of morning light.

Goes for a cig, but no lighter. Notices Daryl's green suede jacket draped on a chair closer than her purse. Digs through the pockets, finds a matchbook. Sparks, deep drag. Debates.

Daryl's eyes flutter... sits up, bangs in his eyes.

SANDY

Morning, darling. You sleep well?

DARYL

Yeah... you?

SANDY

Well enough. How about you conjure up your best hunter-gatherer instincts, round us up some coffee and breakfast. A little room service maybe?

DARYL

I can do that.

He rises, pulling his pants on. Strolls over to where she is.

DARYL (CONT'D)  
So, last night --

SANDY  
No, not another word about that.  
It was lovely. Just leave it.

Puts his hand on her cheek. She squeezes it, delicately brushing it aside.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
Don't keep a lady waitin'. We've both got a big day ahead of us, don't we?

**INT. IMPALA - MOVING - ATLANTA STREETS - MORNING**

Daryl at the wheel, Sandy beside him, sipping coffee from a Styrofoam cup. Rounds a corner to --

THE FULTON COUNTY COURTHOUSE

A looming, Beaux-Arts-style block of stonework. Arched windows, pilastered pillars, PEOPLE up and down the steps.

SANDY  
Here's fine. I'll just cross.

ON THE CURB OPPOSITE the front steps, Daryl throws it in park, engine running. Long beat. Then --

DARYL  
I can pick you up if you need me to.

SANDY  
Probably best not worry about it.  
Besides, you've got your case in civil court. But thanks again for a wonderful evening.

He nods. An awkward beat. Before he can protest, she exits, shutting the door. She turns back momentarily --

SANDY (CONT'D)  
Good luck.

Sees her look both ways, crossing the street in his REARVIEW.

**INT. MILLEDGEVILLE POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY**

Bullpen still humming. Osborne, now in a Brooks Brothers suit, draws a knot for a tie from a FILING CABINET stash.

COLEMAN  
(slams phone down)  
Got a hot one, Boss...  
(reads from his notes)  
...  
(MORE)

COLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Miss Helen Ray, a clerk at Zayre  
Department store over in Macon heard  
about the murders, recognized the name  
Carswell Carr from a credit card  
purchase yesterday.

Everyone REACTS --

OSBORNE  
Holy shit -- what time yesterday?

COLEMAN  
'Round 1pm. She sold a tape recorder  
and 4 blank cassettes to a tall,  
Caucasian man. Red hair, she thinks  
mid-20s.

LT. TULLY  
Better make sure the credit card  
company knows to flag his credentials.

COLEMAN  
I'll get on the horn with 'em.  
(re: tie)  
Looks good on you. When's the presser?

OSBORNE  
In an hour --  
(to Lt. Tully)  
You hear that, Jimbo? Boy's lying his  
ass off but making me feel better. 'S  
how you get promoted around here.

LT. TULLY  
Oh, in that case, it looks like a  
refried dog turd.

OSBORNE  
(to Coleman)  
We gotta get her with a sketch artist  
too. Who do we know over there? Damn  
best lead we have yet --

MAN (O.S.)  
I'd say it's the only lead you've got.

**RONNIE ANGEL** looms, seemingly out of thin air. Nothing  
angelic about this marble slab of a man. 30s. Appears every  
inch the ex-wrestler in a Sears suit. Buzz cut. Restrained  
power like bands around dynamite. Pops a butterscotch button.

LT. TULLY  
(*who the fuck are you*)  
Help you with something?

ANGEL  
Special Agent, Ronnie Angel. Georgia  
Bureau of Investigation.

OSBORNE  
GBI? But we didn't call you.

ANGEL  
County Comish be my guess.

Osborne exchanges bewildered expressions with his men.

OSBORNE  
I haven't spoken to him in months.

ANGEL  
Part of your problem right there.

OSBORNE  
Don't think he minds, either.

ANGEL  
Pretty self-explanatory, way I heard.  
The last Police Chief was the County  
Comish's huntin' buddy. Didn't wanna  
sack him but that fella couldn't stay  
off the 'shine and clubbing the tar  
outta colored detainees.

(bristles all around)  
The Mayor sacked 'im, probably afraid  
of Yankee lawsuits. They brought you  
in to clean it up, but that don't mean  
the County Comish likes you. Point'a  
fact, he's probably looking to shitcan  
you the moment the right opportunity  
presents itself.

OSBORNE  
You're more informed than most State  
sends our way, I'll give you that.

COLEMAN OSBORNE (CONT'D)  
We're not a bunch of country 'nuff of that.  
bumpkin rednecks here --

Osborne cuts him down with a stare. Angel shrugs.

ANGEL  
Let's you and I ride up that lead,  
Chief. We can use a sketch artist from  
my Macon branch.  
(to Coleman)  
You got that address, right?

Coleman looks at Osborne, unsure. Osborne nods. No  
discussion. Hands Angel the paper with the address.

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
(re: Osborne's tie)  
And Chief, go with a blue tie for that  
presser. I'm wearing brown and I'm  
gonna be standing right next to you.  
Wouldn't want us to match.

SLAM TO:

**ON TV:** Osborne gives a PRESS CONFERENCE in his blue tie next to several OFFICERS, OFFICIALS, including Angel, standing off his shoulder. A GRAPHIC: MILLEDGEVILLE HOMICIDES.

PULL BACK TO:

**EXT. HOLIDAY INN HOTEL - LOBBY - LATER THAT AFTERNOON**

The TV plays the news in the lobby. The FRONT DOOR opens and a tired Sandy drifts in. Notices SOMEONE reading a NEWSPAPER on a couch with a bold headline: HORROR IN MILLEDGEVILLE.

The paper lowers. Daryl. Flashes that easy grin.

DARYL

Guess what? No trial. We settled.

She can't decide if she's happy to see him.

SANDY

'S wonderful. You leaving soon?

DARYL

Tomorrow. What're you up to?

SANDY

Heading to the lounge for a quick wind me down. It's been a day. I'm booked on a 6:20 flight out tonight.

DARYL

(checks his watch)  
It's only 3. We should celebrate a little. I'll drive you to the airport.

SANDY

I s'pose I have a couple hours. Why don't we explore? We can walk.  
You see much more when you walk.

He smiles, enjoying the echo of their earlier conversation.

**INT. PEACHTREE CENTER - DOWNTOWN ATLANTA - AFTERNOON**

A kaleidoscopic, glass maze in the heart of Atlanta's decaying convention district. An insular city-within-a-city.

Daryl and Sandy explore... like tourists or newlyweds...

**INT. HYATT REGENCY HOTEL - MAIN LOBBY - DUSK**

Architectural splendor. Fountains, towering escalators, plants winding down from balconies over 20 stories high.

Daryl and Sandy take it all in, tiny among the surroundings.

## EXT. HYATT REGENCY HOTEL - ELEVATORS - MINUTES LATER

Daryl and Sandy ZOOM to the top, city glittering around them.

## INT. HYATT REGENCY HOTEL - POLARIS BAR - DUSK

The revolving Polaris bar is a blue-glass dome with 360° views of Atlanta. Daryl and Sandy at a table with cocktails.

DARYL

Every man should leave a mark on this life.

SANDY

And what do you think you'll be remembered for?

Daryl genuinely considers his response. Pivots --

DARYL

You ever written a book?

SANDY

I haven't been published longform yet, but at some point I will -- *proper*. I have some proposals out.

DARYL

Would you write a book about me?

SANDY

Why, you have a riveting secret life you haven't told me about? Perfect for the paperback rack?

DARYL

I haven't got long to live.

SANDY

You what? Are you ill?

DARYL

No, nothing like that...

(then)

I'm going to be killed. Sooner than later. It might be in two weeks, maybe two months, I don't know when exactly, but within in a year, I'll be dead.

Sandy, waiting for the joke. For common fucking sense. Nope.

SANDY

Killed? Killed by who?

DARYL

For things in my past. I've made some tapes that explain things... kinda a diary of sorts. So that when it happens the truth can be known. I'm sure it'll make world headlines.

SANDY  
And where are these tapes now?

DARYL  
With my lawyer in Miami. In his safe,  
sealed with instructions to only be  
opened after my death.

SANDY  
(taken aback)  
Bloody hell... *you're serious.*

DARYL  
That's where I'm headed this weekend.  
I think you should write the book.  
It's a lot to ask, I realize...

The lounge is full but right now they're the only people here. A shift in atmosphere powered by Daryl's intensity.

DARYL (CONT'D)  
The tapes are a sort of... diary with  
my thoughts about things... my past.  
But I'm not a writer -- *you are.*

A COCKTAIL SERVER intrudes. Daryl waves her off.

SANDY  
This is the moment where you say,  
"Gotcha luvie," and tell me this whole  
thing is just a joke in poor taste.

DARYL  
I wish it were that simple.

SANDY  
(weirded out)  
I'm tired. We should get going.

DARYL  
I upset you. SANDY (CONT'D)  
I'm fine.

DARYL (CONT'D)  
I can drive you.

SANDY  
No, I'll grab a cab, thank you.

And she leaves. He stares after her as she exits --

**EXT. HYATT REGENCY HOTEL - POLARIS BAR - MOMENTS LATER**

Daryl chases Sandy down. She shakes hand off her shoulder.

SANDY  
Why the hell would you say something  
like that to me?

DARYL

But I thought a woman like you would understand.

SANDY

What's that supposed to mean? You really frightened me up there.

DARYL

Sorry... I didn't mean to upset you.

SANDY

(looks at her watch)  
Fucken hell, I missed my flight too.

DARYL

You can grab the next one. C'mon, just lemme drive you to the airport. I won't mention anything about it again.

Sandy considers... her journalistic instinct at work.

SANDY

I'm bloody starving. Let's get out of this cold. Not another word about it.

**INT. ALL-NIGHT DINER - NIGHT**

One of those Mel's Diner knockoffs with car ports, a walk-up counter. Sandy and Daryl in a booth before the remains of what was probably a silent meal.

SANDY

Daryl, I have to ask...  
(off his look)  
Have you gotten yourself in a trouble?  
Somebody have it out for you?

DARYL

No, nothing like that.

SANDY

I've met some shady characters in my time but not someone upset enough to want to kill me. Not even my ex-husband -- though I'm sure it crossed his mind.

DARYL

There's a story there. I'd like to hear it.

SANDY

Only you're dodging my question.

DARYL

I thought you didn't want me to talk about it.

SANDY

I don't. But humor me anyway.

DARYL  
I told you I don't know who it'll be.

SANDY  
Is it Organized Crime? Are you a mob  
hit man or something?

Shakes his head. Maybe enjoying the game.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
(snaps her fingers)  
I got it. You're in, what's that --  
oh, bloody hell -- witness protection.

DARYL  
That's a good one, but not quite.

SANDY  
You rob a bank? Make off with your  
mates' cut? Off your rocker? Planning  
to assassinate another Kennedy?  
Who's left anyway? Teddy?

Both laugh at how absurd it all sounds.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
Maybe it's all just a come-on to get  
my interest.

DARYL  
But I already got you into bed.

SANDY  
Once. And you aren't likely to ever do  
it again at this rate.

DARYL  
So we're bargaining now.

SANDY  
And you're withholding.  
(muses)  
I'll get it out of you yet.

**INT. IMPALA - DANCE HALL PARKING LOT - MINUTES LATER**

Cars, CLUB-GOERS. MUSIC PULSING. Daryl pulls in, parks.

DARYL  
You know, you haven't asked me about  
government work.

SANDY  
As in the military?

DARYL  
Sometimes the government needs things  
done the public can't know about.

Sandy brightens... does her best to contain it. The first kernel of the truth she's been hunting for.

SANDY

Which is why you'd put them on tapes  
and gave them to your attorney.

DARYL

That'd be one way to protect my story  
in case something happened to me.

SANDY

Or *when*.

(skeptical)

So this business about being in your  
father's business back in New Mexico  
is what -- some kind of cover story?

DARYL

I didn't start working with my father  
until recently. He wanted me to, for a  
long time. Maybe I should've listened.

Sandy's hooked. But knows she'll have to be coy, play along.

SANDY

I think I've had enough of this grim  
guessing game for the evening.

DARYL

(re: Hall)  
Shall we?

SANDY

How'd I let you talk me into this  
again?

**INT. DANCE HALL - DOWNTOWN ATLANTA - LATER THAT NIGHT**

It's Saturday Night Fever, Southern-style...

... TWO STORIES OF JAMMED DANCE FLOORS. BODIES grooving to  
George McRae's 'ROCK YOUR BABY'. On the LOWER FLOOR...

... DARYL AND SANDY. BYSTANDERS surrounding them as they  
swirl with abandon... rhythmic, sexual energy palpable...

**EXT. BEHIND DANCE HALL - LATER THAT NIGHT**

They couldn't wait for the car. Making out like horny  
teenagers by a set of DUMPSTERS, pawning and panting.

SANDY

(in his ear)  
I want you...

DARYL

Now -- ?

SANDY (CONT'D)

-- YES -- INSIDE ME -- NOW!

She goes for his pants to free him, but he brushes her away, reaches up her skirt with his hand between her legs. Hikes her higher against the wall, her legs enveloping him...

Her heels fall... bumps her head. Awkward, but she gives over to the ecstasy of it, his face buried in her neck, climaxing.

HELEN RAY (PRE-LAP)  
Was real specific about what he  
wanted...

**INT. ZAYRE DEPARTMENT STORE - MACON, GA - DAY**

**MISS HELEN RAY**, 20s, country gal next to her STORE MANAGER, 50s, behind the COUNTER, across from Angel and Osborne. We recognize her as the clerk Knowles visited earlier.

HELEN RAY  
... a portable, battery-powered cassette recorder. Said he was a traveling salesman and needed it to make notes on the go.

OSBORNE  
What'd you think of him?

HELEN RAY  
Well, he uh, smelt good. He was polite. Politer'n most that come in here anyway. He didn't seem like the type of person who, uh... who you're looking for. A killing type...  
(off their looks)  
He was nice. I said that right?

ANGEL  
You're gonna have to come with us,  
Miss. Sit with a sketch artist.

HELEN RAY  
I'm not in some kind of  
trouble am I?

STORE MANAGER  
(jumping in, irritated)  
How long will this take?

ANGEL  
It'll take as long as it takes, sir.

STORE MANAGER  
It's just that, I'm short-handed. My other girl called in sick. Now this. I don't think we can manage without her.

ANGEL  
Oh, you'll manage. Lucky for you, we're going to keep the fact the victim's credit card was used here for the time being out of the papers.

Shuts the Store Manager up instantly.

**EXT. HOLIDAY INN - HOTEL PARKING LOT - MORNING**

Sandy next to the Impala, smoking a cig. Deliberating.

Daryl exits the hotel with her luggage. Loads the car.

**INT. IMPALA - MOMENTS LATER**

As Daryl steps in, he hands her three stacks of NEWSPAPERS: an ATLANTA-JOURNAL CONSTITUTION, a NY TIMES, a MIAMI HERALD.

DARYL

A local, a national, and a UK paper for where you're headed. Figure a journalist wouldn't mind a little reading material for the flight.

SANDY

(taking them)  
's mighty thoughtful of you...

As Daryl turns the ignition --

SANDY (CONT'D)

Wait. (he does)  
I've been thinking about your offer to drive me to Miami.

DARYL

It's still on the table.

SANDY

Unless you think it's a terrible idea which it certainly might be.

DARYL

I understand the need for company.

SANDY

(stung)  
What do you mean?

DARYL

Traveling around the way you do.  
It must get lonely.

SANDY

What're you implying? That I'm desperate for company or something?

DARYL

No, I didn't mean it that way.

SANDY

How'd you mean it, then? Let's get this straight -- I don't need you, or anybody. You and I are nothing alike.

(then)  
Shit, maybe this is a terrible idea.

DARYL  
You're overthinking it.  
(starts the car; grins)  
'Sides, if I change my mind, I can  
just dump your body on the side'a the  
road somewhere.

SANDY  
(softening)  
At least I'll be a suntanned corpse.

The opening strains of John Denver's '*MY SWEET LADY*' over:

**ROAD MONTAGE:**

Their VOICES accompany us through a **SEQUENCE OF SHOTS...**

-- HIGH ABOVE as the Impala curves through WETLAND FOREST ROADS, past thick tree lines and mostly deserted roads.

SANDY (V.O.)  
What was it like growing up in New  
Mexico?

-- DARYL DRIVES THE IMPALA DOWN RTE 75, Sandy with her window open, warming herself against the autumn sunlight.

DARYL (V.O.)  
Probably ordinary compared to anything  
you're accustomed to. Not fantastic.  
Not Fleet Street.

SANDY (V.O.)  
It's not all that fantastic. Your  
parents still together?

-- AT A RAILROAD CROSSING, the Impala waits for a rusty FREIGHTER to pass. Crosses when the GATE ARMS rise.

DARYL (V.O.)  
Oh, my Ma, she'd never leave my Old  
Man. Never. I also have two sisters.  
One's a beautician, the other's  
married. Fairly ordinary.

-- A ROADSIDE DINER, Daryl and Sandy in the WINDOW.

DARYL (V.O.)  
My Old Man and I don't see eye-to-eye  
much. He didn't like my ambition.

As they leave, Daryl gives some HOBO some spare change.

-- THE IMPALA glides over the broken white lanes of RTE 75. Sandy naps. He looks content.

SANDY (V.O.)  
Must be difficult working for your  
father. Surprised you agreed to it.

-- AT GAS STATION CONVENIENCE STORE, a CLERK hands Daryl a credit card slip to sign. He does so quickly.

DARYL (V.O.)  
It's just for now. I've got my eye on other things, bigger things...

In the gas station WINDOW, SANDY studies her reflection among the bright, silly American logos. Pepsi-Cola and Pennzoil Motor Oil and Amigos Tires. Frets about aging.

Daryl pumps gas. Cleans the Impala windows scrupulously.

Sandy checks her new SUNGLASSES in the visor mirror. Youngish, they make her feel better. She rips the tag off.

DARYL (V.O.)  
What about your family?

Nearby, a DAD and MOM attempt to wrangle 3 hyper, pre-adolescent KIDS into a CAMPER VAN.

Daryl and Sandy watch them, amused for different reasons.

SANDY (V.O.)  
An older brother and sister, Mum and Dad. A charmingly middle-class, Oxford household with a touch of eccentricity. Neighbors coming and going, tea at 6, bedtime stories, that sort of thing --

**INT. IMPALA - MOVING - US RTE 129 - DAY**

Daryl driving, Sandy, feet on the dash. The Denver track still humming from the RADIO...

DARYL  
You were loved. That's a special thing.

SANDY  
'S where you have one up on me, Daryl.

He looks at her. She shrugs.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
The reality is a bit darker. More Dickens than Oxford.  
(why not)  
My mother abandoned me as a baby. Left me at a crossing near Grand Union Canal. Some maintenance worker found me. I suppose I should thank him for it, send him Christmas card...  
(laughs)  
So I grew up in an orphanage. As much as you can grow up in a place like that. Wicked, wicked nurses. They'd beat you for any little infraction.  
(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)

Rip your hair out by the handful,  
stuff you in a broom closet for hours  
on end...

(lights a cig)

Far as Mummy goes, I don't know who  
she is or where she is. But I always  
imagined a sibling or two. Maybe a  
brother, just shows up one day looking  
for me, wants to go grab a pint.  
I'm not holding my breath...

Daryl hanging on her every word...

SANDY (CONT'D)

Don't know why I just told you that. I  
don't tell anyone that. But for some  
reason I feel comfortable with you.

DARYL

I'm glad you feel that way with me.

(then)

How do you feel about a little off-the-  
road detour?

**EXT. IMPALA - MOVING - US RTE 129 FLORIDA BRIDGE - DAY**

The Impala zips over before pulling down the embankment --

**I./E. IMPALA - UNDER THE BRIDGE - SUWANNEE RIVER - DAY**

MOVING along the muddy river bank past several GARGOYLE-ESQUE  
FISHERMAN, casting worms from old tin cans on their hooks --

**EXT. SUWANNEE RIVER - DOWNSTREAM - DAY**

The Impala is parked now and they're exploring along --

THE RIVER'S EDGE. Sandy, child-like, arms upraised, wanders  
under the shadowy canopy of straggly PINE TREES draped in a  
silky seaweed. Her fingers brush against them...

The sound of the FOREST RISES... a RISING SWOON of water,  
birds, insects, wind. She closes her eyes, takes it all in...

Nearby, Daryl watches, spools some moss into his hand.

SANDY

It's beautiful isn't it?

DARYL

It's cotton moss. Beautiful killers.  
All of them.

SANDY

(opens her eyes)  
What do you mean?

Like a snapped reverie. Makes Daryl ashamed for doing so.

DARYL

All these trees are dying. The moss is slowly killing them. The whole South has trees like this, dying slowly.

SANDY

Don't forget the beautiful part.  
(grabs a piece)  
I'm taking a lock as a souvenir.

LATER --

Deeper along the river's edge, they come upon an ABANDONED YELLOW SCHOOL-BUS overrun with Kudzu vines. Like something out of a fairy tale. They explore inside and out.

LATER --

The Impala creeps along the River's edge, towards a deserted clearing with a GRAINY BANK. Perfect for a --

SANDY (CONT'D)

-- what're you doing?

DARYL

Going for a swim. You should join.

Stops. Kills the engine. Starts shedding his clothes --

SANDY

Are you ill? That water looks like a bog's arse --

But he's naked out of the Impala. RUSHES into the water headfirst. Makes some WHOOPING sounds as he swims --

Sandy won't budge. If only she had more willpower. If --

SANDY (CONT'D)

(calls out)  
Only for a minute, yeah?

And she steps out of the Impala. Strips to her underwear, still Dior, and absolutely out of place. Wades in SLOWLY... It's FREEZING. Looks mortified at the edge. Trembles.

DARYL

You have to do it fast or you'll psych yourself out. It'll be OK...

SANDY

Bugger... alright...

She returns. Stops. HOPS -- SPLASH -- the SHOCK OF COLD WATER takes her breath away -- can scarcely breathe -- suddenly Daryl's there -- lifting her up like a water baptismal.

DARYL

There, there... I gotcha. I gotcha.

## EXT. SUWANNEE RIVER - MOMENTS LATER

IN THE RIVER now, further down, Daryl shows Sandy the Palmistry lines on her hand, outlining them on her palm....

DARYL  
Line of the Heart... Mount of the  
Sun... Line of Life...

As they swim throughout the river, laughing, splashing, exploring, their V.O.'s OVERLAPPING --

KNOWLES (V.O.)  
There's nothing ordinary about you.

SANDY (V.O.)  
Tell me something perfectly  
useless about yourself.

DARYL (V.O.)  
I know all the faces on the  
Beatles Sgt. Pepper album  
cover. Crowley, Poe, Fred  
Astaire, Shirley Temple --

SANDY (V.O.) DARYL (V.O.)  
That is perfectly useless, I agree. You?  
Daryl.

SANDY (V.O.)  
I know all the books in the  
Gideon Bible, Old and New  
Testament. That's all they  
let me read in the orphanage.

SANDY (V.O.)  
I haven't thought that far ahead.

SANDY (V.O.)  
I think we're all just  
background actors in other  
people's dreams. From death  
to eternity. Shifting roles,  
in and out. A dream cast.

SANDY (V.O.)  
What do you think happens  
when we die?

DARYL (V.O.)  
I know all the faces on the  
Beatles Sgt. Pepper album  
cover. Crowley, Poe, Fred  
Astaire, Shirley Temple --

I agree. You? DARYL (V.O.)

DARYL (V.O.)  
What do you think happens  
after we die?

DARYL (V.O.)  
Give it a shot.

DARYL (V.O.)  
I like that. Reminds me of  
Calvino's *Imaginary Cities*. A  
magical city where everyone  
changes roles periodically.

DARYL (V.O.)  
We live on, I think. We're  
eternal. No matter what  
happens to us. **Eternal.**

TATER --

ATOP THE IMPALA'S HOOD on a blanket. Drying off. Gazing up at FLOCKS OF BIRDS spiraling the sky including a lone --

SANDY

-- that a seagull? I thought gulls  
only flew over the ocean.

DARYL

No, they fly over all types of water.  
In fact, it reminds me of the greatest  
influence in my life.

SANDY

(turns to face him)  
Now, we're getting places. Do tell.

DARYL

*Jonathan Livingston Seagull.* It's a  
book by Richard Bach. You heard of it?

SANDY

No. What's it about?

IN THE SKY: THE LONE SEAGULL we've seen before, circling  
lyrically in the air...

DARYL (O.S.)

It's a fable about what happens when  
an individual breaks away from the  
flock. He risks everything to discover  
experiences that others in the flock  
could never know or understand.  
Eventually he discovers the freedom to  
fly his own pattern, go his own way.  
But he gets ostracized for it.

SANDY (O.S.)

Not a happy ending then.

DARYL (O.S.)

But he's become something else.  
His own creation.

(beat)

What about you? You're a writer -- I'm  
sure you've had influences.

SANDY

None more than a headmistress I had  
once. She encouraged my writing,  
through all the insults, the bullying.  
I won an art scholarship and was able  
to leave the bloody foster system for  
good. **Wrote my way out I did.**

Daryl's about to respond -- hears a NOISE. Coming closer --

TWO RIVER RATS. Hobo *Deliverance*-types, makeshift camping  
gear. Approaching. Daryl instantly alert. Sandy sitting up.

DARYL

(hands her the keys)  
Get in the car and lock it.

SANDY  
(low)  
Why are they dangerous...?

DARYL  
I don't wanna find out. Go.

Sandy jumps off, slips into the Impala. Locks the doors.

WITH DARYL... sliding his shirt on, crosses to meet them.

DARYL (CONT'D)  
Help you boys with somethin'?

BEARDED RIVER RAT  
S'wrong with your lady friend?

## LONG-HAIRED RIVER RAT

Laughs like a wheeze. Half his teeth missing.

DARYL  
Yeah, but maybe I do. Suggest you both  
keep on goin'. Don't want any trouble.

BEARDED RIVER RAT  
Sounds ta me as if he's  
bossin' us around...

LONG-HAIRED RIVER RAT  
... Fer sure what it sounds  
like to me.

SANDY'S POV: Daryl doesn't wait. ATTACKS. JUST PUMMELS BOTH MEN. Fists, knees, elbows, STOMPING THEM AS THEY'RE DOWN --

Doesn't hear Sandy yelling, HONKING THE HORN for him to stop.

He snaps out of it. Doubles back to the car. They drive off --

I.E. IMPALA - MOVING - U.S. RTE 75 - SHORTLY THEREAFTER

They've been driving in silence.

DARYL  
Real sorry you had to see that back there.

SANDY  
For a minute, I thought you were going  
to kill 'em both.

DARYL  
I wasn't going to do that.

SANDY  
I'd bloody hope not. What if it was  
all just a misunderstanding?

DARYL  
Is that really what you think?

SANDY

No...

(then)

They were going to hurt us weren't they?

DARYL

Maybe more than just a robbery, be my guess. And we were a ways from any kind of help. But I wouldn't let them.

She watches his eyes dart in the REARVIEW. He SLOWS, pulls the Impala to the SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY, engine running.

DARYL (CONT'D)

You mind driving some? I need a quick break...

SANDY

OK... Lucky for us I learned how to drive on the right side of your road.

DARYL

Just for a little while.

She slides over him behind the wheel and he slides to the passenger side. Only they stop, as their lips briefly touch.

SANDY

There's blood on your face here...

He POPS the glovebox... a handkerchief inside. She takes it, starts to wipe the blood off... only they kiss... and more... it's heated, passionate... CARS and TRUCKS pass OUTSIDE.

#### I./E. IMPALA - U.S. RTE 1 - MOVING - AFTERNOON

Florida's version of PCH... a four-lane highway along scenic coastline of oceanfront RESORTS, HOTELS, HIGH RISES.

Sandy's at the wheel, Daryl sleeping soundly in her lap. Abruptly wakes... disoriented, startled.

SANDY

Quite the nap you took, Daryl.

He sits up. PALM TREES, the SUN drowning in the distance.

SANDY (CONT'D)

Look how far I've gotten. I drive a lot faster than you do.

He glances at the speedometer. She's going 95. If Daryl's concerned -- he might be -- he does his best not to show it.

DARYL

Where we headed?

SANDY  
 Never stayed at the Fontainebleau  
 before. Supposed to be rather  
 glamorous. You up for it?

DARYL  
 Sure... I'm up for it.

**EXT. FONTAINEBLEAU HOTEL ENTRANCE - LATE AFTERNOON**

A citadel of iconic luxury along Atlantic Beach. Sun tans and sundresses and cigars under Panama hats and --

**Daryl and Sandy.** Outliers departing the Impala. Tall, pale cream redheads even after being out in the sun all day.

They both seem to know it... sharing the secret looks couples develop over time, Daryl tipping a BELLHOP for their luggage.

STAY ON THEM past hanging garlands, under crystal chandeliers like upside down wedding cakes, Cal Tjader BEATS buzzing...

**INT. FONTAINEBLEAU - SANDY'S HOTEL SUITE - DUSK**

Galaxies from their last suite. Luxurious in every way. Ocean views, blades of light. Sandy on the phone. Daryl on the BALCONY looking out.

**INT. FONTAINEBLEAU - LOBBY - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Both Sandy and Daryl at a sunken table along the wall. Debonair evening wear. Only something's off with Sandy.

SANDY  
 Sure you're up for this? You don't  
 have to meet my friends.

DARYL  
 I don't mind. They're from London?

SANDY  
 Jim's at the Enquirer but we worked at  
 the Daily Mail together when I was  
 fashion editor there. He helped get me  
 my trial run. And Susan is, well, an  
 artist, a painter. For now anyway.

DARYL  
 Just for now?

SANDY  
 Susan's had so many incarnations now  
 it's bloody difficult to keep track.

DARYL  
 I see. I'm sure we'll all get along  
 like apple pie and ice cream.

SANDY  
 As long as you don't say things like  
 that, perhaps...  
 (off his look; deflects)  
 There'll be a lot bantering about  
 industry, gossip. Could get tedious.

And suddenly they're coming... around the CORNER...

**JIM MACKENZIE**, 40, tweed coat, fading pate, make him a dead ringer for an aging professor. His wife **SUSAN**, mid-20s, platinum blonde (really brunette) like one of his students.

*Hello*s all around. Daryl, trying to appear comfortable.

**INT. FONTAINEBLEAU - LOUNGE - LATER THAT NIGHT**

A TABLE with food, drinks. Convo *His Girl Friday* fast. Sandy comforts Daryl, with a hand on his knee. Susan observes them.

JIM  
 The new boss, Merwyn has  
 every bottle of Glen in his  
 bureau.

SANDY  
 Like Thanton. A little sipper  
 by noon.

JIM (CONT'D)  
 How bad can a bloke be if he  
 needs that?

SANDY (CONT'D)  
 Except I heard he's an  
 incorrigible bastard.

JIM (CONT'D)  
 Oh, his tantrums are first  
 rate spectacles.

SUSAN  
 (to Sandy)  
 Speaking of tantrums, I saw  
 Francis over the holiday.  
 Making a scene in SoHo after  
 a bucketload of champers.

SANDY  
 (to Daryl)  
*Francis Bacon*, the painter.

DARYL  
 (lying)  
 I know who he is.

SUSAN  
 Prattling on about skin  
 creams and boot polish -- and  
 Georgie.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
 Oh, he still misses, Georgie.  
 Poor thing. And those boot  
 polishes are the only thing  
 Francis dyes his hair with.

JIM  
 Someone here shouldn't be  
 talking about hair dye.

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
 (slaps his shoulder)  
 Keep that mouth shut, if you  
 know what's good for ya.

Daryl stands...

DARYL  
 Gonna grab some more smokes.  
 Anybody need anything?

SANDY  
(checks her purse)  
I could use another.

The moment he's gone --

SUSAN  
A bit young, innit he? My brother's  
age.

That stings, but Sandy takes it in stride.

SANDY  
He's just a friend. It's nothing  
serious. He'll be on his own way soon  
enough.

**INT. FONTAINEBLEAU GIFT SHOP - MOMENTS LATER**

Daryl in a register line. Scans the NEWSPAPER rack, their  
FRONT PAGES for Milledgville Murder news until it's his turn.

**INT. TAVERN - MIAMI - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Sports themes and coats of arms. Daryl much more relaxed,  
shows Susan trick shots around the felt. Impossible shots,  
wowing people. There's even *APPLAUSE*, bet money won.

AT THE BAR NEARBY, Sandy watches with pangs of jealousy she  
can't understand, Jim off her shoulder with a pint.

JIM  
Ken's antsy. Goin' on about how you  
haven't landed the big interviews:  
Agnew, Onassis, Barbara Walters.

SANDY  
It's called a cold streak. You'd know -  
- you've been on quite a few yourself.

JIM  
I'm just relaying.

SANDY  
And I'm just reminding. It'll pass.

Jim nods. Not so sure. Sandy, still watching Daryl and Susan.

**INT. FONTAINEBLEAU - SANDY'S HOTEL SUITE - LATE NIGHT**

Daryl and Sandy in bed. He's on top, moving rhythmically.  
From Sandy's expression, it's not going well.

SANDY  
If you're not into it we can stop.

DARYL

No, no, just give me some time and  
everything will be alright.

SANDY

Well, now I need some time.

And she breaks away, going for a cig on the nightstand.  
With a reluctant sigh, he collapses on his side.

SANDY (CONT'D)

I'm not used to this.

DARYL

Used to what?

SANDY

I'm not used to it being so bloody  
difficult. I usually have to slow  
someone down. You understand how that  
makes me feel?

DARYL

Don't feel that way. It's not... you.

SANDY

Then what? There somebody else?  
Back in New Mexico?

DARYL

It's not that --

SANDY

Then what then? Are you gay?  
Swing more one way than the other?

Daryl... barely contained menace.

DARYL

You shouldn't say things like that.

SANDY

It's better to be honest in bed. If  
you can't make it, you can't, darling.

TIGHT ON DARYL. Perspiring now. Fighting something.

HIS POV: Sandy exiting the bed to the bureau. He rises after.

SANDY (CONT'D)

You were fine out on the highway.  
Maybe you need a little more  
excitement. Control...

She steps towards him... inches from his face...

SANDY (CONT'D)

Total domination? Maybe you want to  
tie me up? Hurt me a little?

In her hands, her Dior stockings... STARTS TO TIE THEM AROUND HER NECK... MAKES HIM TAKE THE REINS WITH HIS HANDS...

SANDY (CONT'D)  
 (gasping as he tightens)  
 You need to choke me, *then do it.*  
 Choke it all out of me. *Harder...* I  
 want to pass out...

And he's *CHOKING HER TIGHTER* at her urging, pulling the stocking. Her hands rove below his waist. She's giggling now, but it sounds fucking strange because she's choking too --

SANDY (CONT'D)  
 Oh now you're ready for me.  
*YOU'RE SO READY* --

And they *FALL TO THE FLOOR*, Daryl *TIGHTENING THE STOCKING OVER HER BACK*, and presumably, mounting her from behind --

SANDY (CONT'D)  
*MORE, BLOODY MORE* --

SLAM TO:

DARYL ON THE FLOOR

Masturbating in the dark... Sandy's Dior stockings bulging his neck. Finishes grinding his teeth, biting his lips.

Sandy on the bed nearby, sleeping. Unaware of any of this.

Daryl sits up, unwinding the stocking from his neck. Suddenly *OVERWHELMED* with shame. Shivers. Sees a *SHAPE* move in the...

Corner... that *ONE-ARMED SHADOW CREEP* along the wall.

GUTTURAL VOICE  
*...you weak, cocksucking sissy...*

Daryl bolts for the bathroom. FLICKS the light on.

**EXT. FONTAINEBLEAU - OUTDOOR POOL AREA - THE NEXT MORNING**

Tanned bodies in and out of this Olympic-sized pool surrounded by wicker chaise lounges.

Sandy, in a bathing suit, shades, quirky Aussie bushwhacker's hat shielding her pale skin. Reviewing notes. Looks up at --

Daryl rising out of the water. Shakes loose. Draws several female stares along the way... not lost on Sandy.

Grabs a towel on the chaise next to hers, dries off.

DARYL  
 What're you reading?

SANDY  
Notes for my interview tomorrow.  
Have a nice swim?

DARYL  
Not bad. Who's the interview again?

SANDY  
Your Attorney General, William B.  
Saxbe.

Daryl whistles. Not bad.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
Just in time really... I haven't had a  
big interview in awhile. Feeling more  
anxious than usual.

DARYL  
Is that why you left London?

SANDY  
Hell no, I was doing well. I needed a  
change of scenery. Get out of my  
comfort zone, if that makes sense.

DARYL  
At least it wasn't because of a man.

Sandy won't offer up anything there and we do wonder...

DARYL (CONT'D)  
What're you interviewing Saxbe about?

SANDY  
Focus is *recidivism*. Say that three  
times fast, get your tongue in a  
tither. But I haven't the faintest how  
your criminal justice system works.  
It's not exactly English Common Law.

DARYL  
I know a little about it. I took a few  
criminal justice courses in college.

SANDY  
That's be wonderful but aren't you  
seeing your lawyer today?

DARYL  
(shakes his head)  
He's not in the office. I called.

SANDY  
Why's he here and not in New Mexico?

DARYL  
He's a family attorney. We moved to  
New Mexico when I was in junior high  
so we just kept on. He's trustworthy.

Reaches for the nearby suntan lotion...

DARYL (CONT'D)  
You're going to burn up out here.

Starts applying it to her legs. She doesn't protest.

**INT. FONTAINEBLEAU - SANDY'S HOTEL SUITE - LATER THAT DAY**

Daryl mounting Sandy from behind, her stockings around her eyes like a blindfold... his fantasy bleeding into reality.

It's heated, passionate -- an afternoon delight -- the first "successful" sex they've had. She laughs.

SANDY  
So you just needed props... a dash of theatricality. Why didn't you say so?

**IN THE BATHROOM - LATER**

Sandy drying off after a shower. Daryl rushes up excitedly, holding a Lilliput magazine in his hand.

DARYL  
This right here. Right here.

Holds them out to her. She eyes them closer.

SANDY  
My Ilie Năstase profile.

DARYL  
This is how I want you to write about me.

SANDY  
He's a world-ranked tennis player. And you're... a secret, government, operative with a military background who helps run your father's restaurant business? I see the similarities.

Saying it like that just makes him feel ridiculous. Deflated. Daryl at loss... like he might breakdown.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
Forget it. Let's have some music.

Goes for a NIGHTSTAND RADIO. Fiddles stations. Finds --

Freda Payne's 'BAND OF GOLD'. She CRANKS IT. Daryl softens, takes Sandy's hand, twirls her around. She laughs. Suddenly they're both dancing out of FRAME ON TO --

**QUICK MONTAGE:**

- A MIAMI BEACH DANCEFLOOR. Daryl and Sandy swaying to 'BAND OF GOLD'. The growing CROWD parts as they move, a kaleidoscopic shimmer of light and motion --

-- LEAVING THE NIGHT CLUB. They thread their way through the CROWDED Miami Beach STREETS passed KIDS, COUPLES, VENDORS.

-- ALONG RTE 1, Daryl at the wheel of the Impala, Kool in his lips, Sandy next to him. Leaving Miami in the rearview.

-- A WEST PALM BEACH HOTEL ROOM. Sandy writing notes, Daryl drawing on POSTCARDS with sunny tableaus, penmanship sharp.

-- Daryl and Sandy watch an ALLIGATOR WRESTLING MATCH in a crowded FAIR. An old Seminole Indian drags a ANGRY GATOR around by the tail. Jumps on it, CLAMPS ITS JAWS closed.

-- A DOWNTOWN OFFICE BUILDING. Daryl drops Sandy off.

-- SAXBE'S OFFICE. Sandy interviews **WILLIAM B. SAXBE**, the U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL, a distinguished, grim-suited Ohioan we suspect hasn't smiled in decades. Doesn't smile now either.

-- THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER SATELLITE OFFICE. Sandy arrives in bushwhacker's hat, greeting STAFF, Jim at a CORNER DESK.

From a NEARBY OFFICE, **KEN MCCARTEN**, the FEATURES EDITOR, 50s, eyes Sandy with barely concealed contempt.

-- A BAR PATIO. Daryl walks on stage, takes a banjo from a DEPARTING PERFORMER. Nods, while Sandy claps wildly nearby.

DARYL

(sings in mic)

*I know an old lady who swallowed a  
bird... How absurd to swallow a  
bird... She swallowed the bird to  
catch the spider that wriggled and  
jiggled and tickled inside her... She  
swallowed the spider to catch the fly,  
but I don't know why she swallowed the  
fly... Perhaps she'll die...*

LATER --

Daryl and Sandy along a back wall, tipsy. SOMEONE SINGS Lynn Anderson's '*HOW CAN I UNLOVE YOU?*'

DARYL

I wanna apologize.

SANDY

For what?

DARYL

The other night. Making you feel unwanted.

SANDY

We've done better since, haven't we?

DARYL

Thing is, I've been having the best time of my life these last few days.

(MORE)

DARYL (CONT'D)  
Maybe because I'm finally with someone  
who accepts me for who I am... *for*  
*what I am*. For once, I feel... normal.

**INT. THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER OFFICE - WEST PALM BEACH - DAY**

Sandy at a DESK working on her Saxbe piece. McCarten hovers.

MCCARTEN  
Surprised you're even here, Sandy.

SANDY  
A good journalist doesn't spend all  
their time kooked up in an office,  
*Ken*.

MCCARTEN  
This isn't London, Sandy. We do things  
differently here.

SANDY  
I know. I'm following the rules.

MCCARTEN  
We have rules about results too. To  
say we've been underwhelmed would be  
an understatement.

SANDY  
But I've only just started --

She takes in the OFFICE AUDIENCE, including Jim nearby,  
looking like a pained wolfhound.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
Perhaps we should move this discussion  
to your office.

MCCARTEN  
I'm not finished.  
(revels)  
Your Telegraph and Daily Express  
connections were supposed to land you  
celebrity interviews and you haven't  
landed a *single* high profile piece.  
Upstairs set Saxbe up.

SANDY  
It's called a cold streak.

MCCARTEN  
We don't do cold streaks in the  
States. We do results.

SANDY  
I have other stories to file, I have --

MCCARTEN  
Once you're finished with the Saxbe  
piece, you'll need to pack it up.  
Your contract's not being renewed.

**EXT. WEST PALM BEACH STEAKHOUSE - EARLY EVENING**

Daryl and Sandy in a booth. Daryl recognizing her shitty mood but not quite sure what to do.

SANDY  
Tell me more about these mysterious tapes.

He wants to. Instead he shakes his head.

DARYL  
You know I can't.

SANDY  
(testy)  
Well fuck, tell me something, Daryl!  
(no response)  
Are you sure this all isn't just a morbid obsession? Have you seen a psychiatrist?

DARYL  
I saw one once. He told me I had the *perfect criminal mind*.

SANDY  
That's nothing to boast about.  
(then)  
You aren't going to tell me anything are you?

DARYL  
And you're not just fucking me for a story are you?

Sandy bursts out laughing. Flippant. *Steely*.

SANDY  
Actually, you've got it backwards. The only one getting royally fucked around here is me. But you can only get fucked so long barely getting off before it all just becomes another trip to the dry cleaners, yeah?

Stare at each other. Brooding anger.

DARYL  
I'll tell you something *not* on those tapes, something you'll understand.

SANDY  
Now we're bloody getting somewhere.

DARYL  
Before we moved to New Mexico I got into trouble once. I stole this bicycle, so they sent me to this reform school up in Marianna for a'year, Florida School For Boys.  
(MORE)

DARYL (CONT'D)

It was worse than your orphanage...  
 there was this one-armed supervisor  
 who worked there, a man named  
 Caldwell... he used to take us to this  
 utility shed to discipline us. And  
 he'd... do *unspeakable things*. There  
 was this ceiling fan he'd turn on to  
 drown out the screams but you could  
 still hear 'em. There was blood  
 everywhere and pieces of tongue stuck  
 to the mattress where he'd make you  
 lay down. The boys that didn't  
 survive, he'd make me bury in graves  
 off in the woods at night. Lotsa  
 colored boys, they got it bad. Dead  
 bodies didn't bother me like the  
 others, so I was useful to him.  
 Got me outta there in one piece.

Sandy, horrified... takes his arm.

DARYL (CONT'D)

I never told anyone that...  
 But now I've told you something.

**INT. HOLIDAY INN ROOM - WEST PALM BEACH - NIGHT**

Sandy's restless. Can hear Daryl's shallow breaths getting sharper, more frantic. Peers over at Daryl in the low light.

He's TREMBLING... pained... fighting for survival somewhere.

Her instinct: to comfort. But an incendiary thought takes hold. Rises. Leaves with something from Daryl's nightstand.

**THE PARKING LOT - THE IMPALA**

SANDY'S POV: digging through the GLOVEBOX. Finds the REGISTRATION. WILLIAM BATES. Huh. A hunting LICENSE. Different envelopes, addresses, slips, maps, etc...

IN THE TRUNK, Sandy rummages. Luggage, fishing equipment, hunting gear. Gets distracted by bag with the --

PANASONIC CASSETTE RECORDER. MIC wrapped neatly around it.

CLICKS EJECT. A CASSETTE INSIDE. Presses it back, HITS PLAY.

KNOWLES'S VOICE (OVER RECORDER)

... Break from the flock, it's  
 inevitable you will draw others in the  
 their own state of transition, seeking  
 similar answers. Seekers, fellow  
 travelers. Just. Like. Her.

Hits STOP. Suddenly shivering, self-conscious. Hits REWIND to track back to the spot he left it. CLOSES THE TRUNK and --

Daryl is there. Off her shoulder. Alert. Sandy YELPS --

SANDY  
Bloody Christ, you scared me.

DARYL  
What're you doing?

SANDY  
I couldn't sleep. Thought I'd work a  
little, get my thoughts in order.  
I didn't want to disturb you.

She holds up the NOTEBOOK in her left hand. He studies her.  
Walks slowly towards her...

DARYL  
You're upset with me, I can tell.

SANDY  
It's fine, darling. Let's head in.  
It's like a Greenland tundra out here.

She drops the keys in his hand, walks past. He doesn't follow  
right away... feels something... his nose... bleeding.  
Horrified, he wipes it away hurriedly, heads after her.

**EXT. WEST PALM BEACH CAFE - THE NEXT MORNING**

Crowded, but it's silent between them. Holiday intimacy gone.

SANDY  
I'm heading back to London Saturday. I  
have a lot of work to do before I go,  
people to see. Unfortunately that  
means there's no more time for us.

DARYL  
I understand.

SANDY  
But it's been a marvelous week.  
Like a holiday.  
(lying her ass off)  
Maybe you'll come to London one day.  
I'll have a chance to look after you  
the way you looked after me.

DARYL  
Couldn't we spend one more night  
together?

SANDY  
No, darling. **No.** Then you would stay  
over and there'd be another and  
another, and I would have to leave you  
at the airport and I would hate that.

**INT. IMPALA - MOVING - WEST PALM BEACH - LATER**

Daryl driving, deep in thought. Sandy staring out at the Florida landscape that's become somewhat familiar. Palm trees, sandstone beaches, wide highways...

**INT. HOLIDAY INN - CAR PARK AREA - SHORTLY THEREAFTER**

Daryl loads the Impala with his stuff. Sandy, suddenly overcome with an urge to get away that's almost unbearable.

Now he's before her in the drowning dusk, eyes desperate.

SANDY

You know, you are quite young, Daryl.  
You can still get married, have  
children. Have the life deep down I  
know you want.

DARYL

I can't. You know I can't.

SANDY

The bloody tapes, right?

DARYL

(considers something)

I --

SANDY

No, no. *Ssssh.* Like I said, I hate  
good-byes. Go now, drive carefully,  
and please, don't let me have to write  
that book for a long, long time.

She kisses him firmly on the mouth... lingering, bittersweet,  
careful not to touch him anywhere else. Breaks away... into  
the HILTON, no turning back. Daryl fades from view...

STAY WITH HER she BREAKS INTO A RUN, rounding the nearest  
CORRIDOR, towards a DINGING ELEVATOR --

**INT. HOLIDAY INN - SANDY'S ROOM - MOMENTS LATER**

Sandy LOCKS the DOOR. Goes to the WINDOW. Lifts a blind --  
THE PARK AREA BELOW. **He's gone.**

**INT. WHITE CHAPEL PUB - WEST PALM BEACH - THAT NIGHT**

Sandy, deep into several Bell's whisky with Jim, Susan and  
some of their FRIENDS. It's loud, festive, but Sandy doesn't  
appear into it. You can tell she's going to beg off early.

**INT. HOLIDAY INN - SANDY'S ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

Sandy in bed. Can't sleep. The PHONE RINGS. A shrill, startling sound at this hour --

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
Hello?

JIM (OVER PHONE)  
Sandy, it's Jim. Daryl's here.

INTERCUT WITH:

**INT. WHITE CHAPEL PUB - WEST PALM BEACH - NIGHT**

Jim, on the pub's phone. OVER HIS SHOULDER, Daryl, with Susan and their friends.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
Wait, how?

JIM (OVER PHONE)  
I dunno. Someone at the Hilton told him. Anyway, he's askin' for you. You wanna come down? Cheer 'im up?

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
Of course not. I can't give be giving him the wrong impression.

JIM (OVER PHONE)  
He's a nice enough bloke. Fulla stories from traveling the country.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
Best chums now, yeah? He tell you the one about the audio tapes?

JIM (OVER PHONE)  
What tapes?

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
Nothing... Jim, I'm so sorry. I feel like I dumped him on you and Susan.

JIM (OVER PHONE)  
Susan's like a restless teen, needs company her age. Long as she doesn't try and screw 'im it's alright by me.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
(veiled jealousy)  
You needn't worry. He's a gentleman.

JIM (OVER PHONE)  
We might head over to my place later if you're interested.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
I'm knackered. But have fun, really.

She hangs up. Alone. Back to fighting her own thoughts.

Jim hangs up. Sees Daryl waving him over. That easy grin...

FADE TO BLACK.

**INT. HOLIDAY INN LOBBY - WEST PALM BEACH - THE NEXT DAY**

As Sandy heads out, a HOTEL CLERK waves her over --

HOTEL CLERK  
Ms. Fawkes, I have a message for you.

SANDY  
From?

HOTEL CLERK  
The West Palm Beach Police Department.

**INT. WEST PALM BEACH POLICE STATION - DAY**

A UNIFORMED DESK OFFICER leads Sandy into --

**INT. WEST PALM BEACH POLICE STATION - GABBARD'S OFFICE - DAY**

**SERGEANT TED GABBARD** looks up from a cluttered desk as Sandy's led across the threshold. Blunt, stockish, balding, a dull tan suit. 40s. Doesn't like thinking too hard.

GABBARD  
Come on in. Siddown, Ms. Fawkes.

SANDY  
What's this all about?

Tentative, she takes one of the chairs across his desk.

GABBARD  
Tell me, what is your relationship  
with this --  
(reads from a file)  
-- **Daryl Golden?**

SANDY  
He's a friend. I met him a week ago  
and he drove us here from Atlanta. I'm  
a journalist based in London here on  
assignment. Why, has something  
happened to him?

GABBARD  
And what about Susan MacKenzie?

SANDY  
Yes, of course. She's Jim MacKenzie's  
wife, one of my colleagues out here.  
(off his look)  
(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)

I have to say, I'm finding all this suspense a bit much. Something happen?

GABBARD

Miss Fawkes. I think you need to tell us everything you know about this man.

**INT. IMPALA - MOVING - EARLIER THAT DAY**

Knowles driving, Susan next to him. She's a stream of busybody consciousness: smokes, applies lipstick, curls her eyelashes in a compact --

SUSAN

You can't take it personally, dearie. Sandy Fawkes has quite the reputation. You hear all sorts'a things about her and the other little Soho spinsterettes that'll leave you positively gobsmacked.

DARYL

That right... ?

SUSAN

They have this informal sorta thing, this Michelin guide for men, rating 'em by sexual prowess. I mean, can you believe it? Any two-legged geezer in a double-breasted Hayward is fair game for their duvets apparently. Gossip-mongering clucks, the whole lot.

(off his look)

Sounds harsh but it's reality. Sandy likes 'em, er, like you.

DARYL

What do you mean?

SUSAN

Young. It's what Sandy's known for. They think she's the greatest thing on Piccadilly. The next day she dumps them and its oyster brunch and Sancerre toasts at Wheeler's and it starts all over again.

Daryl takes this in... stirs something terrible within.

SUSAN (CONT'D)

What I'm saying is... don't feel the need to mope. She's not worth it.

He pulls over to the shoulder of the EXPRESS WAY. Puts the Impala in park, engine running. CARS zoom by OUTSIDE --

SUSAN (CONT'D)

(concerned)

Why're we stopped...?

Daryl... a deep breath. Looks as if he might break down...

SUSAN (CONT'D)  
 (comforts him)  
 Was it something I said?  
 (hand on his shoulder)  
 It'll be alright. Trust me. She's not  
 worth it. Not worth one bloody tear.

And her hand on his cheek now... tasseling his hair. Tender.

DARYL  
Get out.

SUSAN  
 What...?

DARYL  
 You heard me. *GET. OUT.*

*THWOCK!* UNLOCKS the automatic doors. Susan's dumbfounded.

SUSAN  
 I can't just get out here. 'S the  
 matter with you? It's dangerous.

DARYL  
 I won't ask again.

SUSAN  
 (folds her arms)  
 No, no -- I'm not going anywhere. Take  
 me back to the Hotel.  
 (off his look)  
 I won't hear another word. To think,  
 me trying to help you, you silly  
 bastard and this is how you treat me?

His EYES in the rearview mirror... Looking about.

DARYL  
 Fine.

*THWOCK!* LOCKS the doors. A deafening sound.

*AND HE GRABS HER BY THE HAIR -- SLAMS HER HEAD INTO THE DASH -- AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN -- SHE SCREAMS -- FRESH BLOOD STREAMS FROM HER NOSE, HER SPLIT LIP --*

OUTSIDE, we see the struggle inside the Impala on the Expressway, cars whizzing passed obliviously --

IN THE IMPALA, Susan RESISTS -- STRUGGLES mightily to escape as he grapples her -- overpowering her adrenaline with brute strength -- yanks her head close, submissive --

**KNOWLES**  
*FINALLY SHUT UP NOW? MOUTH FULLA  
 BLOOD YOU SHUT RIGHT THE FUCK UP!*

And SHE SPITS THE BLOOD IN HIS FACE -- HE RECOILS -- SHE CLAWS AT HIS FACE WITH NAILS -- SHOVES HIM OFF -- does the impossible -- across his lap to pry open his door --

And GOES SCREAMING INTO DAYLIGHT ON THE EXPRESS WAY --

BACK TO:

**INT. WEST PALM BEACH POLICE STATION - GABBARD'S OFFICE - DAY**

Sandy dumbfounded. Gabbard hand her the FILE. She opens it...  
HER POV: TWO DARYL PHOTOS. One full, one profile. Youthful intensity. Beneath each, a six figure number and a name --

GABBARD  
**PAUL JOHN KNOWLES.** Jumped his parole in Jacksonville earlier this year.

His eyes search hers. They say it all. It's him.

SANDY  
He hasn't got the mustache now.  
(off his look)  
His mustache. I made him shave it off.

GABBARD  
(scribbles a note)  
That's a good detail to have.

SANDY  
So what happens now?

GABBARD  
We have the number of his car, an alert out. If you think of anything else, please contact me.

Hands her a CARD. A beat as she mulls something...

SANDY  
'Course, there is the business of the tapes. Maybe he was right after all.

GABBARD  
(stops writing)  
What tapes?

**FLASH ON:** Knowles driving in the Impala at the beginning, speaking into the TAPE RECORDER below the dash.

GABBARD (CONT'D)  
You said he sent them to his attorney?

SANDY  
That's what he said. Based in Miami.

GABBARD  
(checks his notes)  
Sheldon Yavitz? Name sound familiar?

SANDY  
No... Wait -- yes. I recall seeing something -- a post card --

**FLASH ON:** Knowles in the Atlanta Hotel filling out a POST CARD atop an ENVELOPE with Yavitz's name --

GABBARD  
Did he indicate what's on these tapes?

SANDY  
Not exactly. Not for lack of trying on my part, mind you. I heard part of one. Sounded like a'bit of musing to me. But he thinks whatever's on them will make him famous.

GABBARD  
Famous, huh?

SANDY  
And get him killed. I thought at the time maybe he was just being fatalistic but... maybe he was just telling me the truth.

Long beat. Gabbard scribbles furiously.

GABBARD  
May just be hogwash, but we'll try and get ahold of this lawyer in Miami. Knowles doesn't have a record for violence, far as I can tell.

SANDY  
Is Susan going to be alright...?

GABBARD  
Far as I could tell. Was a bit hysterical...  
(shrugs)  
She mighta provoked Knowles, came on to him and he rejected her -- who knows? You don't know what to expect from the young ladies these days.

OUTER OFFICE AREA - MOMENTS LATER

A disturbed Sandy steps out, comes face-to-face with --  
JIM AND SUSAN. Coming from a SIDE ROOM with a SKETCH ARTIST. Susan's face is blotched and bandaged, her eyes purple and blue like cauliflower.

A stare between the trio... veiled shame and animosity from the couple... *you brought this on us.* Jim steers Susan away.

**INT. SHELDON YAVITZ'S HOME - CORAL GABLES - FLASHBACK - NIGHT**

Dinner in progress. **SHELDON YAVITZ**, 50s, sits at the helm of the table. There's wine, chatter. Hard to tell if he actually enjoys this or if this whole affair was his wife's idea.

Several GUESTS. The PHONE RINGING OFF. Nearby, his wife, **PATSY**, late 20s, looks up. Patsy is what happens when a flower power wild child becomes a suburbanite mother.

**CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA, OCTOBER 24TH, 1974**

PATSY  
(not pleased)  
We're eating, Shell'.

And Yavitz slides his chair back, excusing himself --

|                          |                     |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| PATSY (CONT'D)           | YAVITZ              |
| Tell 'em to call back -- | (over his shoulder) |
|                          | I will, I will --   |

**INT. SHELDON YAVITZ'S HOME OFFICE - FLASHBACK - SAME**

Cluttered with FILES, office supplies, GIFTS from clients, including several craft-style tchotchkes made by prisoners. Yavitz grabs one of two red phones on the desk.

YAVITZ (INTO PHONE)  
Hello?

KNOWLES (OVER PHONE)  
Hey Shelley, this is PJ Knowles...

He's flipping through a nearby ROLODEX with details --

KNOWLES (OVER PHONE) (CONT'D) YAVITZ (INTO PHONE)  
You helped arrange my release Yes, yes, I remember...  
from Raiford. Angela Covic  
hired you.

KNOWLES (OVER PHONE) (CONT'D)  
I'm in town and need a minute.  
I could be in some trouble.

YAVITZ (INTO PHONE)  
Can it wait? I've got guests.

KNOWLES (OVER PHONE)  
I can come there, if it helps.

YAVITZ (INTO PHONE)  
No, no. And we can't talk on the phone  
about it...  
(debates)  
Tell you what. There's a bar across  
from Miami U -- the Inn. I can --  
(checks a clock)  
-- get there at 9pm. How's that sound?

**EXT. UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI STREET CORNER - FLASHBACK - NIGHT**

Yavitz arrives in a sleek, Cobra roadster, two door. A "gift" from a client. Crosses past the Impala out front.

INT. UNIVERSITY INN LOUNGE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A cozy tavern. Mostly young couples, stray drinkers. Carly Simon over the speakers. Yavitz is early, surprised to hear --

KNOWLES (O.S.)  
Over here.

Knowles already nursing a half-gone Planter's Punch at a two-top by the door. Yavitz takes in the noise, patrons...

YAVITZ  
Why don't we sit outside? There's a  
nice patio out there.  
(to a nearby Bartender)  
Lone Star longneck --

PATIO - MOMENTS LATER

Yavitz and Knowles near the back, out of earshot.

KNOWLES  
Thanks again for coming out like this.  
Interrupting your dinner n'all.

YAVITZ  
Don't worry about that...  
(totally sincere)  
Was glad to get outta there, tell ya  
the truth...

KNOWLES  
Read a profile on you not long ago.  
Sun-Sentinel. You really defend all  
those drug smugglers?

YAVITZ  
I like professional criminals. I'm not  
judgmental. I'm too anti-social to  
have regular clients. Is what it is.

KNOWLES  
It's a good business.

YAVITZ  
I do OK...  
(impatient)  
Why aren't you with Angela in San  
Fran? Something happen?

KNOWLES  
A lot actually. Brace yourself, I've  
got something to tell you.

YAVITZ  
I'm listening.

KNOWLES  
**I'm a mass murderer.**

Yavitz considers. Long beat.

YAVITZ  
That's interesting.

KNOWLES  
It's a bit much to digest.

YAVITZ  
Look, ethically, legally, I'm bound to protect my clients or I can get disbarred. Morality doesn't factor in.

KNOWLES  
I thought so.

YAVITZ  
What happened with Angela?

KNOWLES  
Angela and I didn't last four days. She went back to her husband -- so she says. She didn't even let me stay with her. I was at her mother's house...  
(lights a Kool)  
So I went back to Jacksonville. You know how that goes.

YAVITZ  
I'm not sure what you mean.

KNOWLES  
Means fellas like me tend to get into trouble. We're repeat business. And money has a way of runnin' out...

**EXT. SIDE STREET - JACKSONVILLE, FL - FLASHBACK - DAY**

Knowles strolls along a sidewalk looking over PARKED CARS.

**JACKSONVILLE MAY, 1974**

More habit than curiosity. Chevy pickups. Chrysler LeBarons and -- a VW VAN. Window lowered just enough to reach a...

... LEATHER HANDBAG. Passenger side. And since Knowles stole his first bicycle at 7, he's rarely passed on an easy score.

KNOWLES (PRE-LAP)  
I'm worth more'n that. A lot more...

**INT. PAWN SHOP - JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FL - FLASHBACK - DAY**

A frustrated Knowles across a portly **PAWN SHOP CLERK** with loupe and scale, handbag jewelry spread atop a DISPLAY CASE.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
(re: scale)  
When's the last time you had this calibrated? A Troy ounce is 31 grams.

PAWN SHOP CLERK  
 You think I don't know my business,  
 fella? I know my business.

**QUICK MONTAGE:**

POOR NEIGHBORHOODS around Jacksonville. Lots of old TRUCKS, junk, KIDS on faded lawns JUMPING on abandoned furniture. Knowles meets a series of **RELATIVES/FRIENDS:**

AUNT IN A PINK BATHROBE  
 Sorry, PJ, I can't help you.

REDNECK FRIEND IN DIXIE TEE  
 When you get outta, Raiford, hoss?

(eyes darting)  
 Jax PD's got a warrant out for me.

UNCLE IN PAINT COVERALLS  
 That check come, see if somethin's left. But I gotta fix the mower.

AUNT SWEEPING HER PORCH  
 I don't even know where my jackass husband is. You see 'im out there, you give 'im a good ass kickin', will ya?

SOMETIME LATER, Knowles, ambling along, looking defeated through a neighborhood... notices a corner GREEN HOUSE...

Sees **ALICE CURTIS**, 65, retired school teacher outdoors, watering her garden. Takes notice, keeps walking...

**INT. SPORTS BAR - JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FL - FLASHBACK - NIGHT**

Somebody's favorite hole in the wall. Darts, pool tables, TVs, fake ficus. Knowles in the far corner, drinking alone.

Eyes a COCKTAIL WAITRESS. Probably a part-time student. Wholesome, effortless beauty. And since Knowles is easy on the eyes, she returns his smile. He WAVES her over.

The **BARTENDER**, ex-linebacker, polishing a glass, watches...

KNOWLES  
 The bartender your boyfriend?

COCKTAIL WAITRESS  
 He's the owner, actually.  
 (shoots a glance back)  
 Why ya askin'?

KNOWLES  
 How you interact with each other. How he looks at you. How you look back.

COCKTAIL WAITRESS  
 We don't talk titles, darlin', but I go home with him most nights if that's what you're wonderin'.

KNOWLES  
 Most nights... but *not every night*?

She smiles. Sweet. Flirty. Not far off, the Bartender is very much listening. Takes off his apron, cracks his knuckles.

MOMENTS LATER

The Bartender has Knowles in a headlock. They're almost at the exit when Knowles shoves off the door with his legs -- MOMENTUM -- they FALL BACK -- careen against a POOL TABLE.

Knowles recovers, grabs a pool cue off a nearby table -- ducks the Bartender's haymakers -- THWACKS the cue against Bobby's ribs --- THWACK, THWACK -- like a snare drum --

The Cocktail Waitress can't pry Knowles off, PEOPLE SHOUTING, the chaos feeds Knowles, he becomes POSSESSED --

The Bartender lunges with a KNIFE from his boot -- CRACK! Knowles SHATTERS HIS HAND WITH THE CUE --

The blade CLATTERS to the floor.

Knowles scoops the BLADE, RAMS IT IN THE BARTENDER'S THIGH -- he HOWLS -- AGAIN AND AGAIN -- DULL THUNKS -- like raw meat --

Knowles grins at the horrified "audience", blood dripping off the blade. Then, as if realizing his predicament, BOLTS --

**EXT. SPORTS BAR - JACKSONVILLE BEACH, FL - FLASHBACK - SAME**

Knowles FLINGS the BLOODY BLADE atop the roof.

Rounds a CORNER, then another, then --  
A POLICE PATROL CAR behind him. Accelerates, SIRENS ON --

Cuts him off by the DUMPSTERS. Knowles scrambles up the WALL -- SLIPS! -- shit -- into the waiting arms of --

TWO COPS below. Wrangle him. Deliver a *RIGHTEOUS BEATING* --

COP 1 (PRE-LAP)  
Fella don't put up a fight like that --

**INT. JACKSONVILLE BEACH POLICE STATION - FLASHBACK - NIGHT**

Quiet but for Knowles, cuffed in a chair opposite a mammoth HAITIAN, 20s, still bleeding from his wounds, also cuffed.

NEARBY, the TWO COPS that brought Knowles in, a DESK SGT. and a BIG COP that arrested the Haitian.

COP 1  
'less he's pretty damn sure when he gets boxed they're gonna lose the key.

COP 2  
(to Big Cop re: both)  
Bet our collar put up more of a fight than Banana lips over here.

BIG COP  
Had to teach 'im a lesson or two.  
He don't speak much English anyhow.

COP 1  
These Haitian niggerachis are  
spreading up from Miami like a goddamn  
termite infestation. We can't throw  
'em back in the ocean fast enough.

Laughter. Agreement. The Desk Sergeant ruffles his notes.

DESK SERGEANT  
(to Knowles)  
Who's your parole officer, again?

Knowles looks at him. *Fuck you.* Turns away, his stare meeting  
the Haitian's. Cops' conversation FADES OFF...

Knowles. The Haitian. Some silent communication between them.

TIME SLOWS... Knowles's HAND parts... a crumpled piece of  
paper in his palm and a PAPER CLIP which Knowles has  
discreetly retwisted for the lock of the cuffs...

The Haitian's eyes SHARPEN, DILATE. Might be on something.  
What he does next defies explanation --

*EXPLODES* at the BIG COP, wielding the CHAIR LIKE A BAT --  
WAILS THE FUCK OUT OF HIM AGAIN AND AGAIN! Attacks the rest --

A FRENZY. BLOOD SPRAYS THE WALLS, TYPEWRITER KEYS, COFFEE  
FLIES AS THE COPS PILE ON THE HAITIAN like he's gunning for  
the End zone at the Orange Bowl --

Knowles works quickly on the lock --

The Haitian now chokes Cop 1 while BASHING HIS FACE INTO A  
DESK -- BLOOD, TEETH, SPIT splattering like loose change --

The Haitian lets out a primal SCREAM, a VICTORY CRY --

*BLAM!* Cop 2 BLOWS the Haitian's brains all over the ceiling  
from the floor. Swivels, aims for Knowles --

Only Knowles is long gone.

**EXT. ALICE CURTIS'S HOME - FLASHBACK - NIGHT**

The Green House, lone porch light. Breaking quietly from the  
shadows is Knowles... sweaty... like he ran all the way here.

Eyes the DODGE DART in the DRIVEWAY, the silence of the  
street. Circles around the BACK OF THE HOUSE...

INT. ALICE CURTIS'S HOME - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

A house more for memories than people. Old PHOTOS, a piano. TV. Alice Curtis, the old woman from earlier, dozes on a sofa recliner, magazine in her lap, CATS lounging about her feet.

AT THE BACK SLIDING SCREEN DOOR, Knowles CREEPS stealthily. Removes his shoes, socks. Puts his shoes back on WITH THE SOCKS OVER THE SOLES, soundproofing.

Inches open the SCREEN...

Alice Curtis stirs slightly. Doesn't feel Knowles edging over her... wearing HER GARDEN GLOVES, just patient...

HER EYES OPEN, suddenly aware -- he CLAMPS HIS HAND OVER HER MOUTH. She can't even cry out, eyes darting wildly --

KNOWLES  
STOP MOVING.

Alice resists -- he CLAMPS harder, TIGHTENS his grip. She's spirited but powerless under his strength.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
Do what I say and this will be over  
soon, understand? Blink your eyes if  
you understand.

She blinks. Cats whirl around alarmed. One's on the piano.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
Anyone else here? Blink -- once for  
yes, two for no.

She blinks her eyes TWICE.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
This will be over soon.

Gags her with a dish cloth, drags her from the recliner to a chair at a nearby table. Forces her down. Unspools SWATHS of electrical tape, tears them with teeth, binding her firmly.

RAISES THE VOLUME ON THE TV. CLOSER AND CLOSER TO THE TV until the IMAGES AND SOUND OF THE PROGRAM FILL THE SCREEN...

INT. UNIVERSITY INN LOUNGE - PATIO - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Knowles and Yavitz as before.

YAVITZ  
Whoa, hold on, lemme stop you there.  
This is a crime you're describing -- I  
need you to speak in generalities.

KNOWLES  
OK. I've got the specifics on audio  
tapes.

YAVITZ  
(incredulous)  
You recorded these things?!!

KNOWLES  
No, no, not during. After... later.  
(shakes his head)  
Now, I was just getting to the good  
part...

Yavitz -- both riveted and repulsed --

**INT. ALICE CURTIS'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT**

Knowles has RANSACKED the house, now searches several BAGS --

KNOWLES  
Christ, lady, you got a lotta purses --

She's in the corner, totally rattled, her cats zipping around her feet in a frenzy. Knowles holds up TWO SETS OF KEYS.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
Which ones are the keys to the Dodge?

She blinks to indicate. He heads out the FRONT DOOR.

The second he's gone, she struggles. Gets a HAND FREE --

**INT. DODGE DART - FLASHBACK - CONTINUOUS**

Knowles turns the ENGINE. VROOMS to life. Lets it run. Satisfied, turns it off. Looks towards the house...

**INT. ALICE CURTIS'S HOUSE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT**

She's managed to WRIGGLE herself free enough to stand -- only it's too much *too fast* -- PITCHES FORWARD -- FALLS FACE-FIRST AGAINST A GLASS COFFEE TABLE -- *SMASH!!!*

KNOWLES  
(storming in)  
Fuck, I told you not to move, lady.  
Now look what you've done.

He lifts her head off the bed of glass... large SLIVERS in her THROAT, blood oozing over his gloves...

He lifts a nearby SHARD, holds it to her nose... no breath streaks... No signs of life. Lets her head drop.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
Now look what you've done...

As Knowles crouches over her dead body, the CEILING LIGHT ABOVE HIS HEAD forms a Christ-like halo...

As he rises, his FACE DARKENS, and THE HALO BLINDS US...

KNOWLES (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)  
At that moment, I KNEW.

INT. UNIVERSITY INN LOUNGE - PATIO - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Knowles and Yavitz as before.

YAVITZ  
Knew what?

KNOWLES  
That it was time to become something great. No going back. I was a killer now. Killing was my destiny.

YAVITZ  
You probably don't want me to ask, but you wanna give yourself up? I can take you to the station to surrender.

KNOWLES  
I'm not surrendering, Shelley. My  
work's not done.

YAVITZ KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
But each additional crime -- Success --

YAVITZ (CONT'D)  
Sorry -- success -- is making it worse. The police aren't stupid, they're gonna figure out whatever you've done. One way or the other.

KNOWLES  
But these are perfect crimes. No prints. No traces. I changed up how I do 'em, different methods, keep 'em on their toes. And no witnesses. The only good witness is a dead witness.

Yavitz suddenly aware his own well-being may be in jeopardy.

YAVITZ  
Look, uh, if you don't wanna give  
yourself up, that's one thing. But if  
you're caught, you don't want a  
situation where only the two of us  
know. I choose not to be in your "good  
witness" category.

KNOWLES  
You needn't worry. You're on my side.

YAVITZ  
(calculates)

KNOWLES

And my thoughts. Feelings. Just in case there are any dark Buddhas out there, distant disciples.

YAVITZ

Send them to me.

KNOWLES

*To you?*

YAVITZ

I won't listen to them. They'll go in my safe. Be protected under attorney-client privilege. They won't be opened until after -- or in the unfortunate event -- of your demise. We'll make sure your will is finalized and notarized, all in order.

KNOWLES

I have some in the car.

YAVITZ

No, no, send them via the mail. So there's an official trail.

KNOWLES

But if I'm gone, there's no reason the public shouldn't know about these.

YAVITZ

And they will. Trust me.

**EXT.. UNIVERSITY INN LOUNGE - FLASHBACK - NIGHT**

Knowles pulls a boxed Weeble doll out of the Impala's trunk.

KNOWLES

For your boy, Shelley. I remember he was playin' with one in court.

Touched in spite of himself. Wonders if it's stolen. Likely. His car was a gift from a coke smuggler, so he won't judge.

YAVITZ

Thanks... he'll appreciate it.

KNOWLES

Whatever you think a'me, just remember: I came from nothing. My Old Man was nothing but a carpenter, the meanest bastard you never met, and my ma just a homemaker. Now I'm the most successful member of my family. An American success story.

(climbs in the car)  
Be seein' you...

Knowles DRIVES OFF. Leaves Yavitz staring at the Weeble doll in his hand... trying to reconcile the two. END FLASHBACK.

**EXT. SR 80/ SOUTHERN BLVD. BRIDGE - PALM BEACH - DAY**

The IMPALA ZOOMS over a flat-comb, cantilever BRIDGE past --  
 A PALM BEACH POLICE CRUISER headed the opposite way.  
**PATROL OFFICER**, mirror shades, grabs his CB radio, U-turns --

**E./I. IMPALA - MOVING - CONTINUOUS**

Knowles. Charged. Radio blaring *Cubano* music of all things.  
 Gradually notices the SIRENS closing in on his REARVIEW.  
 Deep breath. Moment of truth. No running. No escape.  
 They've both cleared the bridge. Knowles pulls over...

**EXT. SIDE OF THE HIGHWAY - MONROE AND OLIVE - CONTINUOUS**

*SLAM!* The Patrol Officer exiting. Annoyed. Peers into the Impala. Only the back of the Driver's head. No movement.

AT THE DRIVER'S SIDE now, engine on, window powering down.

**PATROL OFFICER**  
*Sir, can you turn off the engine and  
 step out of the vehicle for me?*

Knowles doesn't move. Won't even look up.

**PATROL OFFICER (CONT'D)**  
*SIR, TURN OFF THE ENGINE AND STEP OUT  
 OF THE VEHICLE --*

*BOOM!* The Patrol Officer ducks KNOWLES'S GAUGE just in time!  
*KA-CHIK* -- Knowles racks again -- the Patrol Officer BOLTS --  
*BOOM!* The second blast takes out the a FRONT HEADLIGHT -- the Patrol Officer dives over the hood --  
*BAM, BAM!* The Patrol Officer comes up firing -- *URRRHH!!!* -- only the Impala's fishtailing back on the HIGHWAY --

**I./E. IMPALA - RAILROAD TRACKS CROSSING - MOMENTS LATER**

Knowles exits the Impala, changed into a fresh suit, 12 gauge stowed, brown briefcase in hand. One last look. Goes...

SIRENS approaching... *LOUDER...* *CLOSER...*

**EXT. PALM BEACH NEIGHBORHOOD - LOCUST ST. - MOMENTS LATER**

Knowles pounding sidewalk. Dogs BARKING, SIRENS. JETS from the nearby airport ROARING OVERHEAD.

Towards a SMALL YELLOW HOUSE. RAPS on the FRONT SCREEN DOOR.

**INT. SMALL YELLOW HOUSE - 705 LOCUST ST. - CONTINUOUS**

**BEVERLY MABEE**, ancient at 31, Winston cig, glances up from her favorite TV soap. ON THE FLOOR, her nephew, **DALE**, 6, freckles, plays with Hot Wheels.

DALE  
*Zuh-zoom, zuh-zoom -- someone's here,  
 someone's here, somebody's here --  
 (uncontrolled giggling)*

BEVERLY  
*Shhh with that...*

She LIFTS up on crutches at a small TABLE littered with cerebral palsy prescription bottles. Ambles to the door.

STAY WITH Dale playing, his very own POLICE CHASE complete with audio soundtrack: *VROOMS, SCREECHES, HAIRPIN TURNS* --

Doesn't see KNOWLES ENTER -- his AUNT *GASP* -- THE FRONT SCREEN DOOR CLATTERS CLOSED -- blotting out the SUN --

LATER --

Dale, still on the floor playing with his Hot Wheels. Quieter, eyeing *something* in the corner we can't see. Then --

ZIPS a HOT WHEEL ACROSS THE HARDWOOD FLOOR where it hits --

KNOWLES'S SHOE. In a corner, perched on a limp Lazy-Boy, shotgun in his lap, eyeing the street outside the WINDOWS.

Nearby, Beverly is back at her table -- bound with electrical cord, duct tape on her mouth. Scared witless for the boy.

Knowles calmly presses his shoe atop the Hot Wheel, and...

... ROLLS IT BACK. Dale *smiles*. Knowles nods, eyes a clock.

KNOWLES  
 (to Beverly)  
 Said your sister'd be back by now.  
 She don't arrive soon, it won't be  
 good for you. Nod if you understand.

Beverly nods. Grows more terrified...

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
 Your journey has just started. A dark and lonely desert lays ahead. And if, and when I choose, you'll know how alone you are. There'll be no one to save you. No prayers to recite, no dawn to break the night. I'd make peace with your mortality.

She's taut, truly abhorred by this frightful character.  
Only to have him slump with a shrug.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
Or nothing'll happen at all...  
(grins)  
Jus' depends on my mood.  
(motions)  
Got anything in that icebox with a  
kick? A cold one?

A sound -- THE SOUND. The loud prattle of a '67 beige VW  
PULLING UP. Knowles checks OUT THE WINDOW.

Crouches behind Beverly, who shakes. RAISES THE TV VOLUME  
with a remote. Looks at Dale finger to his lips... *SHHHH*.

**BARBARA TUCKER**, backs in with grocery bags, junk mail. Takes  
us a second to register she's more than just an attractive,  
doppelgänger for her sister: *they're identical twins*.

BARBARA  
(annoyed by the loud TV)  
Bev -- !  
(spots Dale)  
Hey, sweetie, where's --

As Barbara rounds the corner to the KITCHENETTE -- KNOWLES  
SPRINGS -- she GASPS -- a CHOKEHOLD -- her bags spill --

**INT. HOLIDAY INN - SANDY'S HOTEL SUITE - DAY**

*SNAP!* Sandy shuts her suitcase. *KNOCK, KNOCK!* Loud. She opens  
the door. An impatient Gabbard, with UNIFORMED DEPUTIES.

GABBARD  
You need to come with us, *Ms. Fawkes*.  
Not a request.

**INT. WEST PALM BEACH POLICE STATION - AUDIO ROOM - DAY**

A TECH with headphones sits listening, taking notes --

ANGEL (OVER HEADPHONES)  
Ma'am, we're investigating crimes  
Knowles may have committed across  
multiple jurisdictions...

**INT. WEST PALM BEACH POLICE STATION - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY**

Sandy smokes across from Osborne and Angel. Gabbard stews in  
the corner like someone pissed in his Sanka this morning.

SANDY  
I'm in the dark about most of this. I  
only knew Daryl -- er, Knowles, a  
short time.  
(MORE)

SANDY (CONT'D)  
I know what happened to Susan and  
there's now a hostage but I don't know  
anything about your case.

GABBARD  
(jumping in)  
Do you think Knowles was queer?  
A pansy homosexual?

Osborne glares at him. Not tactful. Angel, a poker face.

SANDY  
That's a rather roundabout way of asking me if we slept together.

GABBARD  
Did you two have sexual relations?

SANDY  
Yes. But to answer your first question, no. I don't think so. I just think he was inexperienced.

GABBARD  
*Inexperienced.*

SANDY  
(testy)  
That's what I said.

OSBORNE  
Ma'am, I'm the Milledgeville Chief of Police. Are you aware of a double homicide we had a couple weeks back? Carswell Carr and his 15-year old daughter, Mandy?

**FLASH TO:** Daryl and Sandy in the Impala, the clipped stack of torn articles about the murders in the brown briefcase...

SANDY  
Yes, he'd brought it up once or twice.  
He was carrying around a stack of  
articles about it.

OSBORNE  
Articles? About the murders?

SANDY  
In a briefcase he had. He said he had some friends that lived close to where they'd occurred, so he kept up on it.

The cops all share a knowing look. Not lost on Sandy.

OSBORNE

Knowles met Mr. Carr in a local gay bar the night of November 6th, and were soon seen leaving together...

(then)

Way the house looked initially, we thought it had to be the work of multiple perpetrators, but maybe it was just made to look that way.

SANDY

My whereabouts on that date can be confirmed. I hadn't met him yet.

OSBORNE

We're not accusing you of anything --

ANGEL

That's why we inked you earlier -- we already cleared your prints from the recovered vehicle.

Osborne opens a FOLDER, lays out some PHOTOS from earlier.

OSBORNE

We'd like you to look at these photos. A lot of items were taken from the Carr residence, including wardrobe.

The first is like a CLASS PHOTO of Carswell Carr, something that might be in a company directory. But the next is --

THE MEXICO SNAPSHOT. Carswell's green suede jacket. The one he wore. The one she wore. Sandy's guts twist up in knots. It's one thing to hear, another to see.

SANDY

That one... yes.

**FLASH TO:** SHOTS of Daryl/Knowles in the jacket. The bar. Dinner. The DANCE FLOOR. Warming herself with it.

SANDY (CONT'D)

He was wearing it the night we met.  
November 7th.

The two men exchange charged looks. Their first positive I.D.

ANGEL

You say, he called himself Daryl Golden when you met?

SANDY

Lester Daryl Golden. I only expected to stay with him one night. I know I shouldn't ask this but... what happened to the... young girl?

OSBORNE

Mandy. She was a classmate of my daughter's...

(lets that drift)

(MORE)

OSBORNE (CONT'D)

The killing itself was sadistic. The Coroner said Mr. Carr had 47 puncture wounds. Mandy was raped, strangled. Took the Coroner 6 hours to dislodge the stocking she was gagged with. The wife came home from her night shift at the hospital, found them.

Sandy -- roiled by the details. It's *unfathomable* --

OSBORNE (CONT'D)

We're also tracking victims' credit cards. Apparently he was using them frequently from what we can tell.

SANDY

Yes, he used them quite often when we were together.

ANGEL

We're going to need a list of the places you visited.

SANDY

Yes, yes... I have some receipts in my bag -- it's in the other room.

ANGEL

(to Gabbard)  
Can you grab her bag for us?

Gabbard doesn't like the request one bit. Off in a huff --

SANDY

He knows my hotel room number.  
What if he comes after me?

ANGEL

I expect they'd switch you to another room, something without an accessible balcony. There'll be officers posted.

SANDY

Another thing -- the car -- documents in the glovebox, I saw. The name "William Bates" was on the registration in case it was emptied when you recovered it.

OSBORNE

(taking the note)  
B-A-T-E-S.

She nods. Gabbard returns, heaps her purse on the table.

SANDY

(a little sifting)  
Looks like my bag's already been tallied through...  
(glances at Gabbard)  
Here -- he drew this.

The COCKTAIL MAP he drew on the first night. Lots of stops.

SANDY (CONT'D)  
Should be able to give you an idea of  
all the places he's been. His route.

Osborne and Angel look at it. It's only going to get worse.

**INT. SKYWAY MOTEL - LOBBY - FORT PIERCE, FL - EARLY MORNING**

AN ELDERLY CLERK READS aloud from a GUEST BOOK --

CLERK  
-- Mister and Missus Johnson?

Looks up -- Knowles, slightly disheveled, and Barbara Tucker, trying not to look perturbed. Dawn light outside.

KNOWLES  
That's right.

ELDERLY CLERK  
Welcome to Fort Pierce. Been driving  
all night, huh?

KNOWLES  
You bet... Hey, you know a place we  
can get a good breakfast 'round here?

ELDERLY CLERK  
I sure do. Our brochure has a map of  
town, lemme show you...

Slides over the key and reaches for a brochure --

**INT. SKYWAY MOTEL ROOM #12 - SHORTLY THEREAFTER**

Knowles hangs the DO NO DISTURB SIGN outside. Locks it.

Knowles CUTS BED SHEETS into long strips, ties Barbara Tucker to the bed post. She's gagged, tears stream down her face.

LATER --

Nightfall out the WINDOWS. Knowles across from Barbara Tucker on the floor, feet up on the bed, shotgun in his lap.

KNOWLES  
*Comb your hair after dark. Comb sorry  
into your Old Man's heart...*  
(grins)  
Nursery rhymes. My grandmama was an  
Ozark. Used to sing them to us all the  
time as a kid.

Now looms over her. Tenderly puts his hand on her forehead. She trembles. He pulls the sheet gag from her mouth.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
You need to use the bathroom?

BARBARA TUCKER  
No...

KNOWLES  
OK.  
(then)  
That boy back at house, that your kid?  
(she nods)  
How old?

BARBARA TUCKER  
Six.

KNOWLES  
Six. A good age. An innocent age.  
You miss 'im don't you?

She nods. Calculating what to say. Terrified.

BARBARA TUCKER  
What's going to happen to me?

Knowles refastens the gag. She sobs quietly. He checks the window. Quiet. Just the MOON... a wax-dripped Roman coin.

KNOWLES  
(sings)  
*New moon, new moon, do tell me  
Who my own true love will be?*

**EXT. WEST PALM BEACH POLICE STATION - PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

Sandy outside under that same moon... pacing, smoking, thinking... reckoning with the horror of it all.

KNOWLES (V.O.)  
*The color of her eyes, her hair  
The clothes she will wear  
Where's that precious beloved of mine?  
Out there in the night for me to find?*

She ducks the suspicious stares of COPS nearby...

**INT. SKYWAY MOTEL ROOM #12 - THE NEXT MORNING - DAWN**

EYES OPEN. Barbara Tucker. Still gagged, tied and bound.

But no sign of Knowles. RIPS at her binding. Guts and adrenaline. PULLS a leg free --

**EXT. SKYWAY MOTEL ROOM #12 - CONTINUOUS**

Opens the door. VW gone. SCREAMS HER WAY TO THE FRONT DESK --

## EXT. WEST PALM BEACH POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY

As chaotic as you'd expect it to be with a manhunt underway. Osborne, Angel, Gabbard around the room.

SANDY'S POV: THROUGH THE MINI-BLINDS. An armada of NEWS CREWS camped out. Jumps as Osborne taps her on the shoulder --

OSBORNE

Hey -- didn't mean to scare you.

SANDY

I'm fine. It's just a lot.

OSBORNE

I know. For everyone.

SANDY

How much of my participation in this is going to be publicized?

OSBORNE

Not sure I follow...?

SANDY

I'm press, I know how this works. News is spreading. It's only a matter of time before they're on to me.

OSBORNE

You've been cleared, Sandy. Obviously with a man *this* dangerous out there, we need the public's help.

SANDY

*But I slept with him.* It's bad enough with every cop here treating me like I'm some filthy whore who beds down with killers, gets a thrill out of it.

OSBORNE

Sandy, that's not what's happening here --

SANDY (CONT'D)

-- It's not?

Motions. Some COPS are eyeing them. *She's not imagining it.*

OSBORNE (CONT'D)

I'll see what I can do. By the way, good job on that Bates detail.

SANDY

You found something?

OSBORNE

(reads from notepad)  
*William Vernon Bates, 32, an account exec for Ohio Power. His wife reported him missing on September 3rd --*

**FLASH TO:** A BUSY TAVERN. Two MEN huddled at a CORNER TABLE. One is **WILLIAM BATES**, handsome, mustache, other is Knowles, in a turtleneck sweater, bright blazer. They leave together.

OSBORNE (V.O.)  
Bates was spotted leaving the Scott's Inn in Lima, Ohio with a young, red-haired gentleman. Sound familiar?

**FLASH TO:** In a FOREST thick with FOG, the limp, naked FIGURE - - BATES bound to a boulder -- the image from the beginning.

OSBORNE (V.O.)  
They found his body in October in the woods near Williams Reservoir. Beaten. Strangled.

**FLASH TO:** Sandy driving the Impala along RTE 1, Knowles sleeping peacefully in her lap. Both of them serene.

SANDY  
The car.

OSBORNE  
Been missing since we recovered it.  
And his credit cards. Maxed out.

GABBARD (ON THE PHONE)  
*THEY FOUND HER! WHERE?*

The "her" he's referring to is Barbara Tucker. The whole room reacts, trains on Gabbard, including Sandy and Osborne.

GABBARD (ON THE PHONE) (CONT'D)  
Shit yeah, I'll take news like that --  
(hangs up; to the ROOM)  
Knowles left Barbara Tucker tied up in a Motel in Fort Pierce and she escaped. VW is still in play.

A slew of them converge towards a MAP on the wall.

ANGEL  
He's headed North...  
(at Osborne)  
Maybe back to Georgia.  
(to Gabbard)  
How soon can we question Tucker?

GABBARD  
Gonna be a line for that.

OSBORNE  
For a guy who's been leaving a trail of bodies, he's sure leaving a lot of live witnesses behind. Beverly Mabee, her sister --  
(to Sandy)  
You. What do you make of that?

**I./E. FLORIDA STATE TROOPER SEDAN - PERRY, FL - MOVING - DAY**

**TROOPER CHARLES CAMPBELL**, on his usual RTE 27 run through this sleepy Tallahassee suburb. He's 35, ex-Army, all brawn, business. Sees STORES, boat rental YARDS, storage UNITS and --

A 1967 BEIGE VW. Parked outside a local DINER. And a red-haired man climbing in. Campbell goes for his radio --

**I./E. VW - MOVING - RTE 27 - PERRY, FL - SAME**

Knowles, struggling a little with the unfamiliar gearbox, downshifts out onto the highway, AM radio buzzing.

**I./E. FLORIDA STATE TROOPER SEDAN - PERRY, FL - MOVING - SAME**

Campbell pulls over, U-turns fast he can come up behind --

CAMPBELL (INTO HANDSET)  
... off Route 27, headed eastbound...

**HIS POV**: accelerating within view of the VW's rear bumper.

CAMPBELL (INTO HANDSET) (CONT'D)  
... VW plate number six-David-six-nine-zero-zero --

**I./E. VW - MOVING - RTE 27 - PERRY, FL - SAME**

Knowles tilts his REARVIEW, spots the Trooper. His speed -- the limit. Every nerve jangles, blazes. Looks at the SHOTGUN stashed beneath the seat. Checks the chamber: *empty*. Fuck.

SIRENS FLASH. Knowles downshifts, pulls off the SHOULDER. Idles. A Fresh Kool. The tall-brimmed Trooper exits.

CAMPBELL. Approaching, hand on his S&W .357, slowly up to the VW. As Knowles rolls the DRIVER'S SIDE WINDOW DOWN --

KNOWLES  
Was going the limit, Officer.

CAMPBELL  
Hands on the steering wheel where I  
can see 'em --  
(Knowles compiles)  
Sir, step out of the vehicle for me  
with your hands visible.

KNOWLES  
What'd I do?

CAMPBELL  
Sir, I need you to step from the  
vehicle.

Knowles shrugs, unlocks the door. Climbs out nonchalantly. Keeps his hands aloft, lit Kool dangling from his lips.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)  
Turn around. Put your hands on the  
roof and put out your cigarette.

CLOSE ON: Campbell's hands frisking Knowles for weapons...

KNOWLES SPINS -- GRABS CAMPBELL'S WRIST -- catches the big  
Trooper off-guard -- TWISTS -- PITCHES CAMPBELL FORWARD using  
the Trooper's own weight -- SLAMS CAMPBELL AGAINST THE VW --

Knowles at Campbell's back -- rips the .357 from Campbell's  
holster, JAMS IT AGAINST HIS SKULL --

KNOWLES  
How's it feel? How's it fucking feel?

Snaps Campbell's own cuffs on him -- tight.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
Cuffs snug enough? Had lots'a  
practice.

**E./I. GRAN TORINO - MOVING - RTE 27 - SHORTLY THEREAFTER**

Sipping cold Circle K coffee, **JAMES MEYER**, 29, businessman,  
blinks in the mid-day sun. Sleepy, been on the road since 6.

Spots SIRENS IN HIS REARVIEW. Checks his speedometer. Faster  
than he should. *Sigh.* Fucked his day. Turns off a gravelly  
stretch of HIGHWAY. Silences the engine.

IN THE REARVIEW: A tall-brimmed TROOPER exits, approaches...

Meyer rummages for his registration in the GLOVE BOX. A  
disaster zone of envelopes, receipts, a Thomas Guide. Glances  
up out window as the Trooper arrives...

... only it's KNOWLES, in the Trooper's uniform.

**EXT. WEST PALM BEACH POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY**

Sandy sitting in a chair. A DEPUTY looks over at her --

DEPUTY  
Miss, there's a call for you.

SANDY  
For me?

DEPUTY  
(re: the extension)  
The one blinking. Line 3.

Osborne and Angel overhear, observe Sandy pick up the phone.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
... Hello?

INTERCUT:

INT. THE NATIONAL ENQUIRER OFFICE - MCCARTEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Tacky respectability. McCarten leaning in a SteelCase chair.

MCCARTEN (INTO PHONE)  
Sandy, it's Ken at the Enquirer.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
How'd you find me?

MCCARTEN (INTO PHONE)  
You know, we have friends everywhere.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
So you're checking in for my well-being, that it?

MCCARTEN (INTO PHONE)  
I suppose you have me at a loss. I've been a bit of horse's ass, haven't I?

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
Just doing your job. I understand.  
(senses an opportunity)  
I'm in the middle of a huge palaver  
here, an official investigation --

MCCARTEN (INTO PHONE) SANDY (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
I heard what happened. About Yes, yes, get to the point --  
this man you encountered,  
Knowles --

MCCARTEN (INTO PHONE) (CONT'D)  
That's just the sort of experience  
we'd love to have an exclusive on.  
First-hand. Lucrative, naturally.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
I thought you were fairly clear my  
contract wasn't up for discussion.

MCCARTEN (INTO PHONE)  
Frankly, *this* changes the discussion.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
(eyeing cops eyeing her)  
I have to go.

MCCARTEN (INTO PHONE)  
How's a 2-year contract sound? Plus a  
bonus that a knight could choke on?  
(no response)  
C'mon, Sandy. It's the smart play.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
I'll call you back.

Hangs up. Super-annoyed. Wheels turning. Then --

SANDY (CONT'D)  
Can you dial out?

DEPUTY  
Uh-huh. Just dial nine. Local, right?

SANDY  
(smiling and dialing)  
Of course.

**INT. DAILY EXPRESS - MAIN FLOOR OFFICE - LONDON - AFTERNOON**

**JOHN HARRISON**, 40s, features Editor, Cambridge b.g., proofing a story over late day nibbles, coffee. Also on the PHONE:

HARRISON (INTO PHONE)  
... Another SoHo opening? Maybe just slit my wrists now, get it over with.  
(his other line)  
... I better get this. Talk soon.  
(answers the other line)  
Features -- Harrison.

SANDY (OVER PHONE)  
John -- it's Sandy.

HARRISON (INTO PHONE)  
Sandy, homesick for us already? You grab a cuppa with Svetlana Stalin yet?

SANDY (OVER PHONE)  
No, but I have something for you.

HARRISON (INTO PHONE)  
Mmm. You have my rapt attention.

**E./I. GRAN TORINO - MOVING - RTE 27 - SHORTLY THEREAFTER**

Knowles at the wheel. IN BACK, CAMPBELL AND MEYER. Both cuffed, legs shackled. Oil rags STUFFED in their mouths. Dried blood from head blows, rancid sweat.

Knowles eyes them in the REARVIEW. Tugs his last Kool.

KNOWLES  
(to Meyer)  
Say fella, any smokes in here?  
(Meyer shakes his head)  
Don't smoke? Healthy lifestyle, huh?  
(Meyer nods slowly)  
I respect that.

Eyes an APPROACHING GAS STATION. Tilts that way. Campbell's .30 Carbine rifle on the floor of the passenger side.

**EXT. GAS STATION/MINI-MART - ABBEVILLE, GA - DAY**

The Gran Torino circles a set of REAR PUMPS furthest from the door. Knowles inspects. Clear enough. Turns to his hostages --

KNOWLES

Now, I ain't gotta tell you two what happens if there's any antics. You two ain't nuthin' but beetles under a magnifying glass. And I'm the sun.

(points at Campbell)

Hear me, Trooper? I won't be boxed in. It'll be you first, if it comes to it.

Campbell won't meet Knowles's gaze. Knowles heads INSIDE.

NEARBY, a MOTORIST screws the cap back on his Opel Station Wagon. Takes in the weird sight of Knowles and the two men.

**EXT. WEST PALM BEACH POLICE STATION - CORRIDOR - DAY**

Sandy pacing with a cig by the LOBBY. Notices a BULLPEN COMMOTION. A flurry of COPS pouring over MAPS --

OSBORNE

(as Sandy comes over)

Knowles just took a Florida State Trooper hostage outside of Perry, Florida. Then he used that Trooper's car to take another citizen hostage.

SANDY

Oh my God... how'd he manage to take an armed policeman hostage?

ANGEL

Because he's done it before.

All eyes on him.

ANGEL (CONT'D)

If you read his jacket, the first thing Knowles got sent up for was taking a Trooper hostage.

SANDY

(to Gabbard)

You told me he didn't have a history for violence.

GABBARD

Nevermind what I told you. Lucky you're not in the clink, lady.

OSBORNE

Hey, is that necessary? She's cooperating.

GABBARD

Says she is. We don't know for sure.

ANGEL

Let's keep our focus, shall we?

GABBARD  
Last time I checked you're in *my*  
*playpen*. You wanna swing a big dick,  
do it in yours.

ANGEL  
Duly noted.

OSBORNE  
(eyeing a map)  
That car was spotted at a filling  
station near Asheville...

ANGEL  
So it looks to me like he's already  
headed back to our playpen. Good day,  
gentleman.  
(to Osborne)  
Let's get outta here.

GABBARD  
You can take Ms. Fawkes with you.  
She's press now as far as I'm  
concerned. Press *ain't welcome*.

SANDY  
(to Osborne)  
Can I ride with you?

**INT. GRAN TORINO - MOVING - BIBB COUNTY, GA - DAY**

Soft rain against the windows. Knowles off to the side of the road. Smoking, talking into the Panasonic Cassette Recorder.

KNOWLES (INTO RECORDER)  
... Sometimes you gotta let evil do  
what it does. Conquer nature within.  
Nature fears us. The last thing that  
dies in any living creature is the  
fear of man. *The fear of man...*

Tilts his REARVIEW. Campbell, Meyer. His captive audience.

**I./E. ANGEL'S FORD SEDAN - I-75 - MOVING - DAY**

Angel drives, Osborne shotgun, Sandy in the backseat. Along the same route Knowles made his escape.

**EXT. ALONG RTE 42 - MCDONOUGH, GA - DAY**

The Georgia countryside unfurls every direction like a soft watercolor. Bright houses. Woodlands. Ranch-style pastures.

**MCDONOUGH, GEORGIA NOVEMBER 17th, 1974**

STATIC... ZZZZZZ.... RADIO STATION CHATTER overlapping:

WRGC MALE ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
 WRGC Public Radio, 88.3 on  
 your FM dial. A manhunt  
 continues for Jacksonville  
 murder suspect, Paul John  
 Knowles, 28, believed to have  
 --

WKKP ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
 Knowles is a bad hombre,  
 folks. Authorities are sayin'  
 stay home with your doors  
 locked --

FEMALE ANNOUNCER (O.S.)  
 -- kidnapped two men, and  
 last spotted driving a blue,  
 1974 Ford Gran Torino  
 belonging to one of his  
 victims --

PHONE CALLER (O.S.)  
 If God sends Knowles my way,  
 I'll introduce him to my .300  
 Winchester Bolt Action.  
 Hell's bells --

ANNOUNCER CO-HOST (O.S.)  
 Got me a whole lista  
 people Knowles can get rid  
 of. But my wife won't like  
 it cuz my mother-in-law's  
 up top --  
 (STUDIO LAUGHTER)

Leaf-littered ROAD... VRROOM! The Gran Torino whips through --

**E./I. GRAN TORINO - MOVING - RTE 42 - MCDONOUGH, GA - DAY**

Knowles surfing the dial, radio LOUD. Engrossed by the  
 excitement he's created, the chaos. The BACKSEAT is --

EMPTY.

KNOWLES  
 Say my name... Let it reign, reign...

IN A SIDE ROAD INLET, a Henry County DEPUTY in his POLICE  
 CRUISER pulls up from a DIRT ROAD. Goes for his C.B. RADIO --

**E./I. GRAN TORINO / CRUISER / RTE 42 - CONTINUOUS**

KNOWLES -- spots SIRENS FLASHING in his REARVIEW.  
 Adrenalized to the max, eyes wild. PUNCHES THE GAS --

THE CRUISER -- GAINING -- on Knowles's bumper --

KNOWLES -- Eases off the gas.... the Cruiser creeps closer...

KNOWLES  
 That's right --

STOMPS THE BRAKES -- TIRES BAKE ON ASPHALT -- THE CRUISER  
 COLLIDES WITH HIS BUMPER -- FISHTAILS --

KNOWLES -- VROOOOMS ALONG -- swerves through ONCOMING TRAFFIC --  
 - WAGONS, DATSUNS, JEEPS, forced off the highway including --

AN IRRIGATION SEMI -- LOSES CONTROL -- FLIPS INTO A GULCH --

DOWNHILL, RTE 42 & HUDSON BRIDGE JUNCTION -- OFFICERS form a ROADBLOCK. Carbine rifles, pistols, out defensive positions --

KNOWLES -- looking for a TURNOFF -- *fuck it* -- no time -- the ROADBLOCK coming up fast -- rushes to meet his violent fate --

THE ROADBLOCK -- OFFICERS OPEN FIRE -- *BAM, BAM, KRATT!!* -- a FUSILLADE OF FIREPOWER fit for Beirut, only --

NO SLOWING -- *KA-BASH!!!* THE GRAN TORINO PLOWS THROUGH THE ROADBLOCK -- EXPLODING METAL, GLASS -- OFFICERS TUMBLE --

THE GRAN TORINO STAGGERS -- SMASHES INTO A TREE OFF ROAD --

IN THE GRAN TORINO -- Knowles in a daze -- BLEEDING from the head, engine vapor clouding his vision. Hears FAINT VOICES --

OFFICERS APPROACHING -- scrambles -- pulls Campbell's carbine, a .357, the briefcase, eardrums *BRRRINGGING* --

KNOWLES'S POV: OFFICERS THROUGH THE VAPOR -- *KRATT, KRATT!!* -- KNOWLES FIRES -- OFFICERS SCATTER, GET HIT --

KNOWLES -- BOLTS FOR THE FOREST -- a BULLET GRAZES HIS ANKLE, cuts a nasty gash. Felled, Knowles TUMBLES into the dirt --

Staggers up, spins -- unleashes a hail of GUNFIRE. Briefcase, carbine in hand, limps on his bloody ankle into the FOREST --

#### **QUICK MANHUNT MONTAGE:**

The biggest manhunt in Georgia history is underway:

- AERIAL: Silent. FLASHING POLICE CARS tailgate, jam COUNTRY ROADS between GA 42 and GA 155 forming a dragnet. Then --

- *WHUMPH, WHUMPH!* -- A POLICE CHOPPER SWOOPS INTO FRAME over Henry County's SPRAWLING FORESTS, FARMLANDS, spotters peering out rifle scopes. And below, a wave of --

- ARMED SHERIFFS, STATE TROOPERS, COUNTY POLICE comb FOREST FLOORS, BLOODHOUNDS hard-charging --

#### **EXT. DEEP IN THE HENRY COUNTY FOREST - DAY**

Knowles -- down a steep hill -- moving too fast -- SLIPS --

KNOWLES  
*FUCK!*

BRIEFCASE flies -- the Carbine too -- he ROLLS -- LANDS AGAINST bramble, a tree log at the foot of a steep TRENCH.

HOWLS IN AGONY. Picked up a dozen bruises, scrapes on the way down. Maybe broke something. Sits up, sees down the hill --

THE BRIEFCASE: Contents strewn, including the PANASONIC RECORDER. Goes for it. Turns it over... the horror... deck ajar, off-kilt. Panicked, Knowles hits PLAY --

KNOWLES'S VOICE  
 ... And the last thing that dies in  
 any living creature is the fear of  
 man. The *FFFUUHHR OF M A N N* --

GARBLING -- Knowles EJECTS THE CASSETTE -- only it's jammed  
 in the cylinder -- *FUCK!* Looks around. There. Goes for --

A TREE BASE. Starts digging frantically, fistfuls of wet  
 dirt. Will bury it out of sight for now --

**EXT. CRUMBLEY ROAD - MCDONOUGH, GA - DAY**

Knowles limps onto a country road of wooded farmland. Eyes --  
**A ONE STORY-HOUSE.** In the clearing.

**EXT. CLARK RESIDENCE - CARPORT - SHORTLY THEREAFTER**

Knowles stumbles up to an old FORD PICKUP. Has to lean on it  
 for support. Peeks in. There's gas, engine slightly warm.

FROM A WINDOW, owner, **TERRY CLARK**, 27, soft features,  
 glasses, coveralls, spots Knowles hunched over. Vanishes.

Knowles HEARS a door open. Looks at the carbine by his feet.

KNOWLES  
 (sees Clark coming)  
*Hey Mister, I need some help...*

Terry Clark makes his way over to help Knowles.

Knowles quickly scoops the carbine -- FIRES --

*CLICK.* It JAMMED. He checks the chamber and --

*KA-CHIK!* Terry Clark's got a SHOTGUN. Fresh off a hunting  
 trip, so his aim's quite steady.

TERRY CLARK  
*DROP IT. HANDS IN THE AIR, bub!*  
 No funny business now...

Knowles lets the Carbine CLATTER beneath him. Backpedals.  
 Terry Clark lifts the carbine, tosses it on carport's roof.

TERRY CLARK (CONT'D)  
 Keep walking...

KNOWLES  
 You know what you've done?

TERRY CLARK  
 I SAID KEEP WALKING! HANDS UP!

KNOWLES  
 You've caught yourself a devil, fella.  
 That's what you've done, alright...

**EXT. SALEM BAPTIST CHURCH PASTORIUM - MOMENTS LATER**

Knowles hobbles ahead of Terry Clark, hands raised, towards a neighbor's HOUSE, a local Pastor. The PASTOR'S DAUGHTER, 17, leans out the SECOND-STORY WINDOW, eyes wide --

TERRY CLARK  
(up at her)  
CALL THE SHERIFF! I GOT HIM!

**E./I. MILLEDGEVILLE POLICE STATION - LATER THAT DAY**

A CIRCUS awaits Knowles. REPORTERS, NEWS CREWS, ONLOOKERS.

THE PATROL CAR with Knowles ARRIVES.

When they yank Knowles out, he has a lit cig dangling from his mouth. With his dark turtleneck, jacket... looks every inch the handsome, rogue drifter killer.

*CLICK, CLICK, FLASH, FLASH* from CAMERAS all around --

REPORTERS  
*Did you kill Carswell Carr? Where are  
the hostages? How many victims?*

Knowles... surprised, pleased with the frenzy, the attention. It's the moment he's been waiting for. SLAM TO --

**KNOWLES**

Posing for his MUGSHOT. Holding a black slate that reads:  
**4731 / Milledgeville, Georgia / 1974**

LT. TULLY (PRE-LAP)  
Occupation?

**INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MILLEDGEVILLE POLICE STATION - DAY**

Lt. Tully making notes across from Knowles. Coleman observes.

KNOWLES  
Thief.

LT. TULLY  
When you're not stealing, whatta ya  
do?

KNOWLES  
I'm a musician. Guitar.

LT. TULLY  
I hope you appreciate the kinda  
trouble you're in.

KNOWLES  
Yeah. You happen to see all those  
reporters outside. Gonna build my Mama  
a'house before they kill me.

LT. TULLY  
And what exactly you admittin' to?

KNOWLES  
I can tell you what I've done is gonna be impossible one day. It's gonna get harder and harder. Ballistics. Forensics. Scientific advancements. They'll be computers tracking everyone's thoughts, tallying every little dark remark or deed. People will be locked up just for thinking about hurting someone, let alone kill 'em. I'm a rarity. A dying breed. The crest of a giant wave that's already crashing down.

**EXT. AMBASSADOR HOTEL - MILLEDGEVILLE, GA - SAME**

Angel's sedan in the lot, Osborne helping Sandy out. Angel looking annoyed by the delay.

SANDY  
I don't see why we just didn't go straight to the station if he's there.

OSBORNE  
Because we're in the middle of an active investigation, Sandy. Even if you're a material witness, you're still press. How would that look?

As he climbs back into the car --

SANDY  
Where will they be keeping him?

OSBORNE  
He's being processed right now but we'll be moving him around. He's an escape risk after all.

SANDY  
But when should I come by?

OSBORNE  
I'll call you --

ANGEL  
Good day, Ms. Fawkes...  
(as he drives)  
You told her too much already.

**INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - MILLEDGEVILLE POLICE STATION - DAY**

In comes a large, silver-haired Trooper, **COLONEL BEECHUM**, 55, Commander of the Florida Highway Patrol, TWO TROOPERS by his side. Coleman, Lt. Tully lingering in the back.

Colonel Beechum takes a seat across from Knowles, who smirks.

COL. BEECHUM  
I'm only going to ask you one time.  
For humanitarian and Christian  
reasons: tell me where my Trooper is.  
His family's waiting for answers and  
I'd like to give them some.

KNOWLES  
Now you know I can't do that. Not in  
the cards, no, no...  
(to Lt. Tully)  
You contact my attorney, Sheldon  
Yavitz?

LT. TULLY  
He's on his way. Might take him a long  
time to get here though. A *long* time.

COL. BEECHUM  
It's in your best interest to help me,  
son. You're under our control now.

Knowles absorbs the veiled threats. Knows it won't be pretty.

LT. TULLY  
He jack-jawed earlier about more  
victims. But it's prolly just B.S...

COL. BEECHUM  
That so?  
(daggers at Knowles)  
How many you kill, son? Don't be shy.  
This ain't some queer bar like you're  
used to. We can handle it.

Knowles extends his left palm. Traces a figure 8 and a slash.

COL. BEECHUM (CONT'D)  
18....?

Knowles draws again... it looks like --

COLEMAN  
Now it's 35

LT. TULLY  
He's playin' games...

Knowles shrugs. Incites a mixture of revulsion, disgust...

COL. BEECHUM  
If you've done something, don't be a  
sissy faggot about it. Tell me where  
my Trooper is and I'll make sure the  
boys go easy on you.

KNOWLES  
*If you win it, tie a blue ribbon  
around it.*

COL. BEECHUM  
The hell you say?

## KNOWLES

Y'like nursery rhymes? *If you win it, tie a blue ribbon around it. Say it a few times, you might discover where your Trooper's hiding.*

Something lodges in Coleman's head. His mind races.

## IN THE BULLPEN

Osborne and Angel arrive. Make their way towards the...

INTERROGATION ROOM -- THE ONE-WAY MIRROR. Osborne and Angel lay eyes on Knowles for the first time...

## KNOWLES (CONT'D)

You King Kong boys in your uniforms, with your shiny badges, your guns, your cuffs, think you got all the power. Don't think twice about hurtin' people when they can't fight back. But how many'a you ever taken a life? Snuffed a soul with your bare hands 'til the heart was as cold as all those dead stars up there? Oh you don't fool me. All I see is buncha cowards afraid to get honest blood on their hands. Just a pack'a frightened virgins can't uncross their legs on prom night, that's *all you are.*

(leans into Col. Beechum)  
I don't need more than a'pair of your wife's stockings to end your misera --

Beechum has Knowles BY THE THROAT -- the TROOPERS RUSH IN -- not to hold him back -- to help -- RAIN BLOWS -- a SAVAGE BEATING ONLY STOPPED BECAUSE OSBORNE AND ANGEL RUSH IN --

-- Knowles cackling the whole time!

## INT. SANDY'S HOTEL ROOM - AMBASSADOR HOTEL - NIGHT

Sandy unpacking, Scotch in hand. Notices something jutting in a suitcase pocket... the lock of cotton moss. *Cradles it.*

## EXT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - MACON, GA - THE NEXT DAY

A TAXI pulls up. Out steps Yavitz hurriedly, in a tan suit, lugging a briefcase, coffee, newspapers --

## INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

Yavitz at the table. Looks up as GUARDS bring Knowles in shackles, bandaged from his wounds. Waits until they're alone.

## YAVITZ

Looks like you've been treated to some local hospitality.

KNOWLES

Nothing I can't handle. But something tells me I won't be going back to Raiford.

YAVITZ

Depends on our plea, the degree the various prosecutions can prove their cases. Just because they're threading a noose doesn't mean you help them tie the knot.

KNOWLES

(conspiratorially)

I can hear the cops 'round here whispering my case might not even make it to trial.

YAVITZ

(sidesteps the dramatics)

Why don't we take one thing at a time. Now, the hostages --

(from his notes)

Georgia State Trooper, Charles E. Campbell and the Delawarean businessman, James E. Meyer.

KNOWLES

What about 'em?

YAVITZ

The police are convinced you know their whereabouts. Now, if you're willing to divulge such information, perhaps we can negotiate reduced charges, leniency for cooperation especially at sentencing.

KNOWLES

I think I've said everything I want to about that already.

(re: Yavitz's cigs)

May I?

YAVITZ

(slides them over)

You confident in the decision?

(off his look)

Your choice. Had to ask.

KNOWLES

(blazes a Kool)

One thing's for sure, if I do get the death penalty, I don't wanna be electrocuted. Gettin' fried -- that's a bad way to go. One'a the reasons I didn't do anything in Texas. Or at least anything I'll admit to. They love fryin' cons in Texas.

YAVITZ

Firing squad more your thing?

KNOWLES

Maybe. I don't want to be hung  
neither.

YAVITZ

Lethal injection?

KNOWLES

Sure, I'd take poison -- er, lethal  
injection. But I want you to do what  
it takes to keep me alive.

YAVITZ

If even a quarter of what you hinted  
at is true, you have a peculiar way of  
wanting to stay alive.

KNOWLES

I haven't made it easy for myself,  
I'll give ya that.

YAVITZ

Any victims you want to discuss? I  
have a preliminary list authorities  
are compiling where you're considered  
a "person of interest".

KNOWLES

Not really.

Beat. Yavitz won't let this go. Time for a mind game.

YAVITZ

They've made a lot of mistakes then.  
We'll expose them. They can't just pin  
things on you without evidence.

(glances at a list)

I assume this woman, Kathy Sue Pierce,  
in Musella, Georgia -- you never met  
her, right? August 3rd, 1974?

Knowles muses on it. Falling into his attorney's game...

KNOWLES

That one went bad. Was before I had my  
IRS ploy down.

YAVITZ

IRS ploy...?

**INT. PIERCE HOME - FOYER - FLASHBACK - AUGUST 3RD, 1974 - DAY**

**KATHY SUE PIERCE**, 30s, nice face, leads Knowles, salesman's  
seersucker suit, briefcase, into a bright DINING ROOM.

KNOWLES (V.O.)

Something I cooked up to get into  
places. "Bob Williams", IRS Agent.  
Even had a business card from a local  
restaurant...

(MORE)

KNOWLES (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
got it from one of those bowls you  
drop your card in to try and win a  
free lunch. He sure didn't win.

Knowles set his briefcase on the DINING ROOM TABLE.  
SNAPS it open. INSIDE, a pair of DARK GLOVES...

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY**

Knowles, staring off...

KNOWLES  
Was just going to clear the place out.  
But she got upset. And it went bad...

**INT. PIERCE HOME - FOYER - FLASHBACK - AUGUST 3RD, 1974 - DAY**

Knowles and Kathy mid-struggle -- she's FLAILING HIM WITH  
FISTS, FEET -- he can barely control her -- drags her into --

THE ADJOINING KITCHEN. Knowles stretches for the WALL PHONE,  
the dangling CORD -- grips -- WRAPS IT AROUND KATHY'S NECK --

ROUND AND ROUND... SHE'S CHOKING NOW -- a dress strap TEARS,  
her breast EXPOSED. Knowles, panting, looks almost as if he's  
taking Kathy from behind -- until she's still.

Lets her body THUD against the tile floor...

**EXT. BACK YARD - FLASHBACK - AUGUST 3RD, 1974 - DAY**

Knowles, disheveled, exits with the briefcase. Startled by --  
KATHY'S SON. 7 or so. Been playing in the backyard this whole  
time. They share a long stare. Knowles steps towards him...

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY**

Yavitz, surprised to read --

YAVITZ  
-- says you left the boy *unharmed*.

KNOWLES  
Don't sound so disappointed, Shelley.

YAVITZ  
It's just that you mentioned there  
were no witnesses before I thought...  
that included everyone.

Knowles leans back... takes a drag.

KNOWLES  
You can't get 'em all now can you?

That laugh. That *easy grin*...

**EXT. WOODS - HENRY AND PULASKI COUNTIES - NIGHT**

AERIAL VIEW: SEARCH PARTIES covering THICK WOODS between Abbeville and Macon, a galaxy of swarming flashlights.

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT**

Knowles and Yavitz as before.

YAVITZ

This woman in Woodford, Virginia,  
**Doris Hovey**. Was that the Bob Williams  
 IRS routine? October 19th? Or are the  
 police mistaken about that one too?

**INT. HOVEY STUDY - FLASHBACK - OCTOBER 17TH, 1974 - DAY**

NO SOUND. Full of BUSTS, ANTLERED ANIMALS. **DORIS HOVEY**, 53, greying socialite, unloads a SAFE. Pulls stacks of \$100 bills, stock certificates, jewelry cases into a bag.

Nearby, Knowles (different suit, gloves), at her husbands GLASS GUN CASE. Pulls a Remington DOUBLE-BARREL. Loads it.

She brings him the bag. He's surprised how calm she seems.

Knowles SNAPS the breech closed. Lets the barrel drift her way slowly, never breaking eye contact... and... *BOOM!*

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT**

Knowles and Yavitz as before. Knowles looks troubled...

YAVITZ

They don't have a list of missing  
 items here...

**INT. HOVEY STUDY - FLASHBACK - OCTOBER 17TH, 1974 - DAY**

Knowles peering down at Doris Hovey's BODY... BLOOD FROM HER EXPLODED HEAD SPREADS IN A *WINGS PATTERN* OVER A BRIGHT RUG...

THE ROOM practically GLOWS. Deer mounts. Elk heads. Solemn buffalo. All their glassy, fixed stares. Dull mouths, claws. He's a hunter among the trophies.

Knowles hears the beating of wings, the CRY of a SEAGULL... its shape flitting OUTSIDE THE WINDOW --

Leaves without taking anything... not even the gun.

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT**

Yavitz sifts notes. Indifferent to his client's torment.

KNOWLES  
I think we're done for now.

Yavitz looks up. Knowles's expression. Yeah, they're done.

HARRISON (PRE-LAP)  
So the tapes are real?

**INT. SANDY'S HOTEL LOBBY - AMBASSADOR HOTEL - DAY**

Sandy on a LOBBY LINE surrounded by her notes.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
Yes. I heard part of one. The others  
they're fighting over right now --

**INT. U.S. DISTRICT COURT - MACON, GA - DAY**

Jam-packed. Sandy in back, with other press. Yavitz at the DEFENSE TABLE across from **TOM VROMAN**, 30s, a prim, U.S. ATTORNEY, a rising star. On the bench, **JUDGE WILBUR OWENS**, 60s, jelly-jowled, Old Testament-justice vibe.

YAVITZ  
Your Honor, turning the tapes over to this court would be a serious, ethical breach of attorney-client privilege.

JUDGE WILBUR OWENS  
The life-threatening urgency of the matter supersedes your fidelity to attorney-client privilege. Your client revoked that for himself. Turn over the tapes to the Marshals, or I'll find you in contempt, Counsellor.

ON YAVITZ -- THE COURTROOM -- SANDY -- VROMAN, smug --

YAVITZ  
I'm afraid I cannot comply with this request, Your Honor. I don't represent the missing or even the deceased, I represent my client.

JUDGE WILBUR OWENS  
Then you give me no choice. Let's see if jail changes your mind. Court finds defendant's counsel, Mr. Yavitz, in contempt. Bailiff --

Strikes the gavel. The COURTROOM. Pandemonium.

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL CELL - THAT EVENING**

Yavitz... staring at the ceiling. MOVE ACROSS TO... KNOWLES. Same cell. Drawing on a cot... CLOSER ON HIS SKETCH... SANDY.

SANDY (V.O.)  
Yavitz's wife brought her husband's  
mentor, Ellis Rubin to defend her.  
Famous apparently. Defended the Cubans  
in Watergate.

INT. U.S. DISTRICT COURT - MACON, GA - THE NEXT DAY

**ELLIS RUBIN**, 50s, wiry, energetic elegance, Miami-East  
Coaster to the hilt, next to Patsy Yavitz at the DEFENSE  
TABLE. Same crowd as the day before. Sandy in back.

ELLIS RUBIN  
Your Honor, as I said in my opening  
statement, Mrs. Yavitz intends to  
plead the 5th to any questions  
injurious to her husband.

JUDGE WILBUR OWENS  
I wonder, Counsellor, if a contempt  
charge and a night in jail like her  
husband would compel her to reason.

ELLIS RUBIN  
Your Honor, she is his wife and his  
secretary. This information the People  
request from her is privileged --

JUDGE WILBUR OWENS  
They might interpret things more  
loosely in Miami-Dade, Mr. Rubin, but  
here, defendants don't get to shirk  
their civic duties under the guise of  
"privilege".

(to Patsy)  
Do you still refuse to show the  
Marshals where these tapes are?

She looks to Rubin --

ELLIS RUBIN  
(whispers)  
Say, yes.

PATSY  
(nodding)  
Yes, your Honor --

Judge Wilbur Owens leans back in his chair. Inscrutable look.  
A HUSH in the courtroom. Then, the Judge leans forward --

JUDGE WILBUR OWENS  
Your client might find she could've  
saved a man's life and she'll have to  
live with that 'till her doomsday.  
This Court finds her in contempt.

Patsy, quietly floored. Sandy takes in the COMMOTION, Rubin  
shouting, the Bailiff coming to take Patsy into custody.

**INT. SHELDON YAVITZ'S HOME - CORAL GABLES - DAY**

A dozen U.S. MARSHALS turn Yavitz's home inside out while his terrified CUBAN HOUSEKEEPER watches with his SON, clutching the Weebles toy Knowles gifted him. A Marshall finds the SAFE.

SANDY (V.O.)  
Yavitz told the Marshals where to find  
the tapes to get his wife out.  
But he's still in jail.

**INT. SANDY'S HOTEL LOBBY - AMBASSADOR HOTEL - DAY**

Sandy on the LOBBY LINE on the line with Harrison.

HARRISON (OVER PHONE)  
They won't let you see him?

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
I've tried, believe me. They're  
limiting his exposure.

HARRISON (OVER PHONE)  
Considering the relationship you had  
with Knowles, have they considered he  
might tell you where the hostages are?

**INT. MILLEDGEVILLE POLICE STATION - HALLWAY - DAY**

Sandy opposite Osborne and Angel. Mulling her proposition.

OSBORNE  
It's worth a shot.

ANGEL  
You'd be in there with him alone. He's  
already attacked one of his relatives.

SANDY  
I'm a big girl. I'll take the risk.

**INT. MILLEDGEVILLE POLICE STATION - LADIES' ROOM - DAY**

Sandy putting on makeup... the same cardigan and skirt combo  
she wore when she first met him.

**INT. MILLEDGEVILLE POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY**

Coleman gapes at a BOARD MAP of the MACON-Milledgeville area  
spiked with PUSHPINS, PHOTOS, DIAGRAMS noting Knowles path.

COLEMAN  
(mumbling to himself)  
*If you win it, tie a blue ribbon  
around it. If you win it, tie a blue  
ribbon around it... Pabst Blue Ribbon.*  
(lightbulb; aloud)  
(MORE)

COLEMAN (CONT'D)  
Hey, isn't there a Pabst factory in  
Pulaski County?

LT. TULLY  
*Mm-hm.* Near Big Indian Creek.

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

Sandy seated in the same room Yavitz interviewed Knowles.  
Stares at the EMPTY CHAIR in front of her...

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - KNOWLES'S CELL - LATE AFTERNOON**

Knowles in his bunk, staring out a barred window of thick  
glass, crisscrossed bars. Hums absently to himself, then --

KNOWLES  
(sings)  
*She swallowed the lamb to catch the  
dog, she swallowed the dog to catch  
the cat...*

**EXT. FOREST - BIG INDIAN CREEK - LATE AFTERNOON**

Two BRIGHT-VESTED HUNTERS, retirees with rifles, make their  
way into the pine thicket. In the clearing below a...

KNOWLES (V.O.)  
*... She swallowed the cat to catch the  
bird, she swallowed the bird to catch  
the spider, that wriggled and jiggled  
and tickled inside her... She  
swallowed the spider to catch the  
fly... But I don't know why she  
swallowed that fly...*

TREE... BODIES... Campbell, Meyer... only that's gracious...  
BLOATED CARCASSES CUFFED TO A TRUNK FACING ONE ANOTHER. The  
animals, insects, Mother Nature have had at them.

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - KNOWLES'S CELL - LATE AFTERNOON**

KNOWLES  
(sings)  
*Perhaps she'll die...*

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - INTERVIEW ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON**

Still waiting. Eyes the clock. Hears the door. Braces herself  
and -- it's Osborne. Takes her by surprise.

OSBORNE  
We found 'em Sandy. Both men.

SANDY  
When?

OSBORNE

An hour ago. One'a my deputies  
actually figured out the ribbon riddle  
Knowles dropped on us before a pair'a  
hunters stumbled upon them. Our search  
team was minutes away. Pabst. They  
were left near a Pabst factory.

SANDY

I see. Were they... ?

Osborne doesn't have to say it.

SANDY (CONT'D)

That's awful. So I don't get to talk  
to him.

OSBORNE

'Fraid not.

SANDY

(protests)

He might be willing to talk to me  
about other crimes, other --

OSBORNE

No, Sandy, it doesn't --

SANDY (CONT'D)

-- things he might not tell  
you, things --

OSBORNE (CONT'D)

It's over. He's our problem now.

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - OUTER HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON**

Sandy smoking against a wall. Upset. In some strange way, a  
little heartbroken. HEARS --

MAN (O.S.)

Sandra Fawkes?

A plaid-shirted, MAN, 30s, in ill-fitting blazer. Meet --

JOSEY

Jack Josey, Atlanta Journal-  
Constitution. It true you spent a week  
with Paul John Knowles?  
(before she can respond)  
Were you a willing companion or  
captive to this mass murderer, this  
modern-day Jack the Ripper?

SANDY

You've got your hyperbole down, I'll  
give you that. But you've got your  
facts wrong.

JOSEY

Oh, so you weren't about to have an  
interview with him that got cancelled.

SANDY  
Who told you that?

JOSEY  
So it's true. Is it also true you're  
some publicity-seeking broad out to  
make a name for yourself?

SANDY  
Your opinion or someone else's?

JOSEY  
It's just what I heard.

SANDY  
Your sources are dead wrong.

JOSEY  
Why not clear up the record then?  
Helluva story.

SANDY  
(starts away)  
I really don't have time for this  
right now.

JOSEY  
I was there when they brought him in.  
He loved the attention -- loved it.  
But who'd expect a killer'd look like  
that. They're calling him a real  
**Casanova... the Casanova Killer.**

SANDY  
That's a stupid name. Doesn't suit him  
at all.

JOSEY  
Worked on you. Charmed the clothes  
right off'a you.  
(leans in)  
You were fucking a'course. How often?

SANDY  
Piss off, you little cretin --

Her heels are loud as she heads down the hallway --

JOSEY  
(calling after)  
What -- you don't like it? C'mon!

**INT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - KNOWLES'S CELL - NIGHT**

Knowles cuts a deck for poker. Behind Knowles, a gallery of  
feverish SKETCHES. Yavitz inspects them closer...

Seagulls in flight... several Sandy sketches... and a  
MENACING MONSTER-LIKE SHAPE... THE ONE-ARMED MAN.

YAVITZ

You're talented, PJ... in another life  
we'd be meeting at an art show.

KNOWLES

(following his eyes)  
Maybe. But you have to agree, I  
haven't done too bad for myself.

YAVITZ

I suppose everyone has their own  
definition of success.

(re: the sketches)  
Tell me about these...

KNOWLES

(re: a Seagull sketch)  
That's Jonathan leading his flock of  
outcasts. Raising consciousness.

YAVITZ

Like in the book.

KNOWLES

That's right. You heard of it?

YAVITZ

My daughter read it for school.  
It's a children's book.

KNOWLES

(bristles)  
It's not a children's book. It's a  
fable. Fables aren't age specific.

YAVITZ

(won't press)  
OK.

KNOWLES

Now, this...  
(re: One-Armed Sketch)  
That's the stuff of kid's nightmares.  
I bet you never knew the bogeyman only  
had only one arm.

YAVITZ

I don't believe in stuff like that.

KNOWLES

Not even when you were a kid?

YAVITZ

No. You do?

KNOWLES

Oh yeah. He scares me. All the time.  
Even now.

YAVITZ  
Uh-huh...  
(re: Sandy)  
And her?

KNOWLES  
She's someone special alright.

YAVITZ  
Not a... a victim?

KNOWLES  
No. She's a survivor. Like me.  
(then)  
I'll expect you make a bundle of cash  
off alla this. My case.

YAVITZ  
I don't know about that. I wouldn't  
say things are going well for us right  
now. We'll know more after your  
arraignment tomorrow.

KNOWLES  
Oh? Why else would you be sitting here  
in jail with me. The upside, Shelly.

YAVITZ  
I'm your attorney. I'm obligated to --

Only Knowles laughs shrill enough it stops Yavitz cold.

KNOWLES  
Yeah, you are. But that don't mean you  
won't figure out some way to get rich.  
I've been in the system. I know how it  
works.

(dead serious)  
Just make sure my Ma's taken care of.  
That's all I ask. You do that... and  
you and your family will be alright.

If Yavitz is scared, it doesn't show. Knows a threat.

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
Say, after this game, I'll read your  
fortune with these Tarot Cards I drew.

**I./E. ANGEL'S SEDAN - MOVING - MILLEDGEVILLE, GA - MORNING**

Angel driving, Osborne bird-dogging Knowles in the BACKSEAT.  
He's in a bright orange jump suit, cuffed, manacled.

PATROL CARS, in front, behind... a mock parade route on the  
way to the courthouse. Knowles a little giddy for the --

CROWDS. Lining streets. Sidewalks. Atop cars, rooftops with  
binoculars. NATIONAL, LOCAL NEWS and all their mics, cameras.

ANGEL  
It's a nuthouse out here.

OSBORNE  
They've never had anything like this.

**EXT. BALDWIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE - MILLEDGEVILLE, GA - DAY**

Angel's Ford muscles its way to the Courthouse CURB.

POLICE skirmish to keep CROWDS at bay, everyone eager to glimpse this Casanova Killer in person.

IN THE CROWD: Familiar faces. Coleman, Lt. Tully. A stricken Ellen Carr. Ms. Crowley. Helen Ray, the Zayre clerk. Jim and Suzanne MacKenzie. Terry Clark. TEENS, COLLEGE co-eds.

Angel and Osborne pull Knowles out. The CROWD surges.

REPORTERS SHOUT ad-libbed QUESTIONS, poke mics, cameras --

This is Knowles's ROCK STAR MOMENT. Center of the universe.

Basks in the crowd, the attention, a white-hot opioid --

TEENAGE GIRLS  
PJ, PJ, OVER HERE! WE LOVE YOU!

Rubin by his side now, following in Knowles's wake, Angel and Osborne on either side, leading him in --

Knowles eyes search the CROWD, wanting to find --

**SANDY.** Near the front. THEIR EYES LOCK. He approaches.

And it's as if the whole crowd goes SILENT momentarily... they're back at the river, the only two people in the world.

KNOWLES  
You look good.

SANDY  
Thanks.

KNOWLES  
Remember what I said. What needs to be done. Remember --

Only they're dragging him away now, Sandy staring after --

**INT. BALDWIN COUNTY COURTHOUSE - COURTROOM - DAY**

Knowles being arraigned. He tilts back towards Sandy along a far WALL, notebook in hand.

Shares with her a resigned expression... the same one when told her he was going to be killed. Turns back again.

HARRISON (PRE-LAP)  
Merywn doesn't think a "lady" should be mixed up with something like this. Especially one from our paper.

INT. SANDY'S HOTEL ROOM - AMBASSADOR HOTEL - MORNING

Sandy, furious on the other end.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
You can't be bloody serious?

INT. DAILY EXPRESS - MAIN FLOOR OFFICE - LONDON - AFTERNOON

Grey sky out the windows. Harrison has her on SPEAKERPHONE.

SANDY (OVER PHONE)  
Why was it not proper when they sent  
me to into war-zones -- Israel,  
Belfast -- but not this?!

HARRISON  
Believe me, I know. Just get back  
here. Time to come home.

CLICKS OFF. Glances over at **MERWYN ABERNATHY**, the new boss,  
sitting off like a Bishop. 60s. Paternal and patronizing.

MERWYN  
You let her down gently, I'll give you  
that. There's going to be quite a few  
changes around here.

INT. SANDY'S HOTEL ROOM - AMBASSADOR HOTEL - MORNING

Sandy hangs up. SMASHES HER GLASS AGAINST THE WALL. KNOCKS  
SHIT OVER. LOSES IT -- ALL OF IT --

FADE TO BLACK.

KNOWLES (PRE-LAP)  
I've killed more. Many more than what  
they're saying.

INT. INTERVIEW ROOM - DOUGLAS COUNTY JAIL - ANOTHER DAY

Yavitz across from Knowles. Knowles, stubbled, bleary-eyed.

YAVITZ  
Than who's saying?

KNOWLES  
*The press.* I'm not on the front pages  
anymore. *They're forgetting about me.*

YAVITZ  
You need to focus on what's your  
trial. Not the press, not --

KNOWLES  
The night Angela dumped me in Frisco,  
I killed three people in Battery Park.  
Bodies just waiting to be found.

YAVITZ  
You want me to relay this to the San  
Francisco authorities?

KNOWLES

No -- yes -- I mean, I keep hearing things in here. That my case won't ever make it to trial.

YAVITZ

You're on about that again.

KNOWLES

I wanna go somewhere safer.

YAVITZ

I'll see what I can do.

KNOWLES

(near disbelief)  
It's like what I done, *didn't* matter.

YAVITZ

What're you upset about? The threats or that your face isn't plastered all over the front pages anymore?

KNOWLES

(indignant)  
Look, I made a lotta sacrifices to be here. I want leverage.

YAVITZ

(testy)  
PJ, I strongly advise, if you really want to avoid the death penalty -- STOP confessing to crimes you may or may not have committed.

KNOWLES

Help me, then. Show them I'm being cooperative.

YAVITZ

(ruminates)  
They might be more lenient if you help them with their existing cases. How about the murder weapon of the Trooper and Meyer?

KNOWLES

I know where it is.

YAVITZ

That would demonstrate cooperation without adding to existing charges. But they won't let us dictate terms. It'll be quiet because they don't want press involved. They're being watched closely by Governor Carter right now.

Knowles crestfallen. He wanted a show alright.

**INT. MILLEDGEVILLE POLICE STATION - BULLPEN - DAY**

Knowles stands between Osborne and Angel and the same board Coleman was earlier. Studying it. Leans back on a desk.

CLOSE ON: His hands scoop a **PAPER CLIP** off a folder unseen...

## EXT. BIBB COUNTY JAIL - REAR ENTRANCE - DAY

Angel's Sedan makes its way towards the main street.

DECEMBER 18TH, 1974

## I./E. ANGEL'S SEDAN - U.S. 20 NEAR LEE RD. - MOVING - DAY

Angel at the wheel, Osborne shotgun. Knowles in the back looking out at a busy highway of Georgia flat bush. He tears open a pack of Kools with his teeth, lights one.

KNOWLES  
You wanna see a magic trick?

ANGEL  
(in rearview)  
Get cute with me, I'll make you spit it out the window.

KNOWLES  
I'd like to see you try.

OSBORNE  
(to Angel)  
Just leave it, what's the harm?

KNOWLES  
Been waiting your whole life for this GBI. Finally do something worthwhile.

OSBORNE  
(to Knowles)  
Hey. Cut that shit out...

ANGEL  
(stews)  
This is just going to go on. This... circus a'his. We shouldn't abet it.

OSBORNE  
What're you saying?

ANGEL  
I'm saying PJ here has a history of escape attempts, don't ya, PJ?

KNOWLES  
Stellar track record, sir.

ANGEL  
No one would begrudge us one bit.  
It could look like an accident.

KNOWLES  
You think you can just kill a man?  
Even me? It's not easy...

OSBORNE  
He's baiting you. Don't you see that?

ANGEL  
Maybe I don't mind. I can lose our tail, pull over, take care of him once and for all.

KNOWLES  
You do that, you better not miss, GBI.

ANGEL  
Oh, I won't...

KNOWLES  
'Cause after I get away, I'm going to  
pay your wife a visit...

OSBORNE  
*SHUT THE FUCK UP. RIGHT NOW. STOP IT!*

A gunslinger's standoff in the tight confines of the sedan.

ON KNOWLES'S CUFFS: Has freed himself with a paper clip --  
SPITS THE LIT KOOL INTO OSBORNE'S FACE --

KNOWLES SPRINGS OVER THE SEAT -- STRAIGHT FOR OSBORNE'S  
EXPOSED SHOULDER HOLSTER -- HAND ON THE TRIGGER -- *BAM!*

THE SEDAN

VEERS OFF THE HIGHWAY -- DOWN AN EMBANKMENT -- SLAMS INTO A  
BARBED WIRE POST... STEAM FROM THE HOOD.

CLOSE ON THE SEDAN CABIN -- *BAM, BAM* -- MUZZLE FLASHES --

Osborne, dazed on the PASSENGER SIDE. Angel, blood pouring  
from his forehead, holding Knowles's firing gun hand aloft --

Angel POUNDS THE GLOVEBOX with his free hand -- **.38 BACKUP** --  
SEIZES IT -- pushes it towards Knowles's chest... *POP, POP!!*

Knowles JERKS back oozing fresh blood, hazy smoke in the air.

Knowles looks at Angel... that easy grin.

Same smile Adam had when he realized Paradise was lost...

KNOWLES (CONT'D)  
Go on... don't be afraid...

ANGEL -- intent on putting evil down and --

-- Osborne rousing, sees what's happening --

OSBORNE  
NO!!!!

Angel *BLASTS KNOWLES IN THE HEAD!!!*

Knowles's body slumps into a crucifix-like repose.

Out the window, the Seagull circles, watching below...

CUT TO BLACK:

## EXT. FLEET STREET - LONDON - DAY

Establishing. This urban heart of journalism in London.

LONDON, DECEMBER 18th, 1974

## INT. THE CITY GOLF CLUB - DAY

For Fleet Street journalists, this is home away from home. Crypt-dark, but lively as they banter over pints, pretzels.

Sandy at the BAR, chatting up a colleague from the Sun when Harrison arrives, sits off her shoulder. Sandy leans over.

SANDY  
A Bloody Mary to take the edge off  
that hangover, eh?

HARRISON  
Feelin' a bit better actually.  
(motions at BARTENDER)  
I s'pose you've heard.

SANDY  
Heard what?

HARRISON  
They shot your boyfriend.

It's there, flickering in Sandy's eyes... the hatred for the press game where every tragedy is a joke to be had. Just when we think she's going to explode, she breaks into a... grin.

SANDY  
Oh, really?

HARRISON  
Just came in off the telex --  
(as Bartender arrives)  
Gin and T, up the usual way.

Harrison pulls a piece of paper from his jacket. Reads:

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
"Paul John Knowles, an alleged mass-murderer suspected in at least thirty-five killings across the United States was shot dead in an apparent attempt to escape whilst being transferred from one maximum security jail to another."

Lays the telex on the bar. Beat. She picks it up.

HARRISON (CONT'D)  
(studies her)  
Least you needn't worry about  
punchlines around the punchbowl this  
Christmas. After this dies out anyway.

SANDY  
(absently)  
40 days...

HARRISON  
Say again?

SANDY  
Nothing..  
(puts paper in her purse)  
Absolutely nothing.

HARRISON  
If you're headed back to the office,  
don't tell anyone I'm here.

Only she's already gone.

**INT. DAILY EXPRESS - MAIN FLOOR - LATE AFTERNOON**

Sandy steps off the ELEVATOR. Walks quietly to her DESK, enduring several gawking stares from COLLEAGUES around her.

Just sits before her typewriter in the pale, afternoon light.

MAN'S VOICE (PRE-LAP)  
Not tonight, Sandy.

**INT. SANDY'S FLAT - SOHO, LONDON - EARLY EVENING**

Elegant furnishings, artful touches... and a sense of desolation. Someone stays here, they don't live here.

SANDY (INTO PHONE)  
But you've put me off for weeks. I already made the reservation.

MAN (OVER PHONE)  
I know but, things are a bit different now... I don't think we should see each other for awhile. I --

*CLICK.* She's already hung up. Same story. No one wants to see her that way anymore.

LATER - THE BEDROOM

Sandy, buzzed, drinks alone atop her BED, across from her MIRRORED ARMOIRE covered in jewelry boxes, accessories.

Just staring off and back at herself... listless.

IN THE ARMOIRE MIRROR, a PAIR OF HANDS envelop her...

LIPS KISS HER shoulders... then her neck, parting her hair. Hungry hands rove her body, pulling at her nightgown...

It's reverent. It's passionate. It's -- KNOWLES.

SANDY  
Wait, wait. Don't... STOP... STOP!

She's hitting him -- pushing, shoving him away --

He doesn't answer. Stares OVER HER SHOULDER in the mirror.

She HURLS HER TUMBLER AT THE MIRROR -- *SMASH* -- it shatters --

**EXT. LONDON BOOKSHOP WINDOW - SIDEWALK - YEARS LATER - DAY**

Sandy watches a BOOKSELLER arrange a GIANT WINDOW DISPLAY.

It's her BOOK about her experience with PJK: ***KILLING TIME***.

Sensationalistic JACKET COPY BLURBS:

*"JOURNEY INTO NIGHTMARE"; "ON THE ROAD WITH A KILLER", etc...*

Sandy *feels* SOMEONE behind her... a tall, familiar *SILHOUETTE* looming off her shoulder peering in the window...

She turns around.

There's no one there.

Just London street life going about its business.

FACES IN THE CROWD, anonymous, oblivious...

Sandy shivers a little before she walks off.

FADE TO BLACK

*Sandy Fawkes book *KILLING TIME* was published in 1976.*

*The audio tapes of Paul John Knowles were irretrievably damaged when the basement of the Macon courthouse was flooded after a severe thunderstorm.*

No other copies are known to exist.

*The Florida School for Boys was closed in 2011 amid decades-long allegations of physical and sexual abuse.*

*Researchers from the University of South Florida have discovered evidence of dozens of unmarked graves and are advocating for federal funds to conduct an in-depth forensic investigation into the site.*

*18 victims were subsequently linked to Paul John Knowles, with claims as high of 35 by some authorities as new DNA evidence emerges from ongoing investigations.*

CUE opening of Freda Payne's '*BAND OF GOLD*' and we're --

**FINIS**