

L.A. Confidential

by

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Based on the Novel

By

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(minor revisions)

FADE IN:

OVER the opening strains of "I LOVE YOU, CALIFORNIA," a MONTAGE: a mixture of headlines, newsreel footage and live action. Economy Booming! Postwar Optimism! L.A.: City of the Future! But most prominent among them: GANGLAND! Police photographers document crime scenes. The meat wagon hauls ex-button men to the morgue. Where will it end?

EXT. L.A. SKYLINE - SUNSET

Palm trees in silhouette against a cherry sky. City lights twinkle. Los Angeles. A place where anything is possible. A place where dreams come true. As the sky darkens, triple-kleig lights begin to sweep back and forth.

EXT. MANSION (HANCOCK PARK) - NIGHT

The KLEIG LIGHTS are out front. Valets hurry to park a line of elegant cars.

MAYOR (V.O.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you
the future of Los Angeles!

INT. HANCOCK PARK MANSION - BALLROOM - NIGHT

The MAYOR yanks a cloth to reveal a MODEL of L.A. criss-crossed by an elaborate FREEWAY SYSTEM. The CROWD oohs. A COUNCILMAN claps. A SOCIETY MATRON nods her approval.

PIERCE PATCHETT, 50, tuxedoed, watches off to one side. A behind-the-scenes power broker, Patchett exudes authority much more so than the Mayor does.

MAYOR

The Arroyo Seco freeway is just the beginning. We're planning freeways from Downtown to Santa Monica, from the South Bay to the San Fernando Valley. Twenty minutes to work or play is the longest you'll have to travel.

More applause. One REPORTER asks a little too loudly...

REPORTER

How many bodies you think Mickey
Cohen'll be able to hide in all
that cement?

The Mayor wears a plastic smile, ignores it.

INT. THE MOCAMBO - NIGHT

A CLUB PHOTOGRAPHER pops snapshots, but the real action is on the floor where MICKEY COHEN does a wicked "Lindy Hop" with THREE different GIRLS at once. A fireplug of a man, he hardly seems a public menace. Nearby is his bodyguard JOHNNY STOMPANATO. Over it all:

HUDGEONS (V.O.)

Meyer Harris Cohen, Mickey C to his fans. He's the big moocher, local L.A. color to the nth degree. You know Mickey. He runs dope, rackets and prostitution. He kills a dozen people a year. But who you may not know is bodyguard Johnny Stompanato.

His hair in a slick pompadour, Stompanato keeps an eye on Cohen and comes onto a CIGARETTE GIRL at the same time.

HUDGEONS (V.O.)

Johnny's handsome, ladies, but the real attraction is below the belt. Second only to Steve Cochran, he's sometimes known as 'Oscar' because of his Academy Award-size appendage.

Mickey works a sweat on the dance floor. A bottle of champagne pops; Stompanato reacts, nearly draws a pistol from his shoulder holster. As he laughs at himself...

INT. HUSH-HUSH MAGAZINE OFFICE - DAY

Lurid page one headlines cover the wall where SID HUDGEONS types. The essence of sleaze, Sid is the publisher-photographer-writer of Hush-Hush magazine and keeper of inside dirt supreme. As he continues...

HUDGEONS (V.O.)

Remember, dear readers, you heard it here first, off the record, on the Q.T. and very Hush-Hush.

INT. HANCOCK PARK MANSION - BALLROOM - NIGHT

The party continues. The Mayor has moved off to the side with the power brokers. Patchett is a presence.

MAYOR

We're selling an image, gentlemen.
Beautiful weather. Affordable
housing.

(re: model)

Trouble-free transportation. And
the best police department in the
world to keep it all running
smoothly.

EXT. STOREFRONT - NIGHT

A dozen people watch a display window TELEVISION as it rolls
the opening of the hit show "Badge of Honor." Over familiar
THEME MUSIC, "Sgt. Joe Reno" (actor BRETT CHASE) walks the
streets of Los Angeles.

CHASE (V.O.)

My name? Joe Reno. The city? Los
Angeles. A big town. Full of all
sorts of people. It's my job to
help them. I like what I do. I'm a
cop.

INT. HANCOCK PARK MANSION - BALLROOM - NIGHT

The Mayor continues.

MAYOR

But with a second rate Al Capone
out there, L.A. looks like Chicago
in the '30s. Something has to be
done.

As Pierce Patchett nods sagely.

INT. OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

Wrestler GORGEOUS GEORGE primps and poses before flattening
an opponent with a drop kick.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

An enthusiastic crowd adjusts their 3-D glasses.

EXT. COHEN MANSION (BEVERLY HILLS) - DAY

In monogrammed silk pajamas, Mickey Cohen answers the door, his pet BULLDOG Mickey Jr. at his feet. The police are waiting. REPORTERS' flashbulbs pop.

POLICE OFFICER

Mr. Cohen, you're under arrest.

COHEN

Bullshit. What's the charge?

POLICE OFFICER

Non-payment of federal income tax.

COHEN

Bullshit.

EXT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE - DAY

JOHN WAYNE gets his hand prints in the sidewalk.

EXT. WESTCHESTER BEAN FIELD - DAY

MIGRANT WORKERS hurry to finish the harvest. We PAN TO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS who wait impatiently with bulldozers under a "Spirit of the Future" BANNER. As the last picker leaves the field, the bulldozers move in, leveling the bean rows to make way for a housing tract.

EXT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - STEPS - DAY

Flashbulbs pop as Mickey Cohen exits and starts down the steps. Accompanied by his LAWYERS, bodyguard Stompanato and mob lieutenants DEUCE PERKINS and NATE JANKLOW, Cohen ignores REPORTERS' shouts.

REPORTER

How's your bullshit now, Mickey?!

As Cohen gets into a waiting car, the media turn their attention to District Attorney ELLIS LOEW. A singularly ambitious man, Loew loves the spotlight.

LOEW

Today is an auspicious one for the city of Los Angeles. Mickey Cohen has just been sentenced to ten years in federal prison for failure to pay income tax.

(MORE)

LOEW (CONT'D)

As the District Attorney for Los Angeles County, it is my pleasure to declare our great city organized crime free. It is truly the dawning of a new day.

The SONG ENDS and so does the MONTAGE.

INT. PACKARD (ACROSS FROM BULLOCKS WILSHIRE) - NIGHT

December 24th. Wendell "BUD" WHITE, 30, stares at the enormous Christmas tree on the deco platform over Bullocks' entrance. An LAPD cop, Bud's rep as the toughest man on the force has been well earned. In the back seat, with cases of Walker Black and Cutty Sark, is Bud's partner -- DICK STENSLAND. Older, but also a tough hump, "Stens" sucks on a pint of Old Crow.

The passenger door opens and Mickey Cohen bodyguard Johnny Stompanato slides in. Guinea handsome, Johnny wears his curls in a tight pompadour. With his boss behind bars, he's out of work. Bud just stares at him.

STOMPANATO

Officer White. I heard you got a hard-on for wife beaters.

BUD

And you fuck people up for a living. That don't make me you. Capisce, shitbird?

Stompanato smiles. Nervous. Through the window, Bud watches a Salvation Army Santa palm coins from a kettle.

STENSLAND

Bud ain't in the mood for small talk, Stompanato.

STOMPANATO

Look, Mickey C's doing time and half the other guys who'd hire me are dead or left town. I need money. If your snitch-fund's green, I'll get you some fucking-A collars.

Impatient, Bud tugs at a finger, CRACKS a KNUCKLE.

STOMPANATO (CONT'D)

There's this guy. He's blond and fat, about forty. Likes the ponies.

(MORE)

STOMPANATO (CONT'D)

Been pimping his wife to cover his losses. Knocks her around to keep her in line.

Bud's eyes narrow at this last bit of info. Stompanato holds up a slip of paper.

STOMPANATO (CONT'D)

I figure the address is worth twenty.

Bud digs into his wallet, pulls out twenty bucks, exchanges it with Stompanato. Stompanato smiles smugly, grabs a bottle of Scotch from the back.

STOMPANATO (CONT'D)

Yuletide cheer, fellas.

Without warning, Bud grabs Stompanato's tie and yanks, slamming his forehead into the dash.

BUD

Happy New Year, greaseball.

EXT. 1486 EVERGREEN - NIGHT

A stucco job in a row of vet prefabs. A neon Santa sleigh has landed on the roof. Through the front window, we see a fat guy browbeating a woman. Puff-faced, 35-ish, she backs away as he rages at her.

The Packard pulls up out front. Stensland could care less.

STENSLAND

Leave it for later, Bud. We got to pick up the rest of the booze and get back to the precinct.

Bud KILLS the IGNITION, picks up the radio.

BUD

Central, this is 4A-31. Send a prowler to 1486 Evergreen. White male in custody. Code 623 point one. Domestic assault and battery. I won't be here, but they'll see him.

EXT. 1486 EVERGREEN - BUD - NIGHT

steps to the house. Inside, we hear SLAPS, MUFFLED CRIES. Bud grips an outlet cord coming off the roof and yanks.

The sleigh crashes to the ground with REINDEER EXPLODING around it. A beat. The fat guy runs out to investigate, trips over Rudolph.

Bud pounces. Fat guy takes a swing, misses. Grabbing fat guy's hair, Bud smashes his face to the pavement. Once, twice. Teeth skitter down the walk.

BUD

Touch her again and I'll know about it. Understand? Huh?

Another face full of gravel. Fat guy's WIFE watches with apprehension from the steps as Bud cuffs her husband's hands behind his back, empties his pockets. A cash roll and car keys. Bud looks over at her.

BUD (CONT'D)

You got someplace you can go?

She nods. Bud hands her the keys and the cash.

BUD (CONT'D)

Go get yourself fixed up.

WIFE

(nods, determined)
Merry Christmas, huh?

Bud watches as she gets into a pre-war Ford in the drive. She backs over a blinking reindeer as she goes.

STENSLAND

You and women, partner. What's next? Kids and dogs?

INT. STAGE FOUR (VARIETY INTERNATIONAL PICTURES) - NIGHT

The "Badge of Honor" set. A Christmas party in full swing. Eating, drinking, and dancing. Star Brett Chase, seen earlier on television, is holding court.

LAPD Sgt. "Trashcan" JACK VINCENNES, late 30s with slick, good looks, dances with a young ACTRESS. Grinding their way through a ballad, they're obviously hitting it off.

ACTRESS

Brett Chase told me you're the cop who busted Bob Mitchum.

(grinds closer)

These 'Badge of Honor' guys like to pretend, but being the real thing must be a thrill.

JACK

Let's go someplace quiet. I'll give you the low-down on Mitchum.

ACTRESS

You got your handcuffs with you?

JACK

Two sets.

ACTRESS

I'll get my coat.

They're interrupted by Sid Hudgeons.

HUDGEONS

Big V Jack Vincennes! May I have this dance?

JACK

Karen, this is Sid Hudgeons from Hush-Hush magazine.

ACTRESS

I know who he is.

The Actress storms off. Jack looks to Sid.

HUDGEONS

We did a piece last year. 'Ingenué Dykes In Hollywood.' Her name got mentioned.

JACK

Is she?

HUDGEONS

Beats me. Look, Jackie-Boy, a friend of mine just sold some reefer to Matt Reynolds. He's tripping the light fantastic with Tammy Jordan at 2245 Maravilla, Hollywood Hills. It's right around the corner.

JACK

You lost me, Sid. Who?

HUDGEONS

Contract players at Metro. You pinch 'em. I do you up feature in the next issue. Plus the usual fifty cash. Tell me, am I fucking Santa Claus?

JACK

I need an extra fifty. Two patrolmen at twenty apiece and a dime for the watch commander at Hollywood Station.

HUDGEONS

Jack! It's Christmas!

JACK

No. It's felony possession of marijuana.

EXT. 2245 MARAVILLA - NIGHT

WITH a VIEW of Grauman's Chinese. Jack and two uniformed patrolmen wait on the darkened street. An arc light has been set up. Hudgeons creeps back over from the house.

HUDGEONS

They're sitting in the dark,
goofing on the Christmas tree.

JACK

Stand there with your camera. I'll stop here so you get Grauman's Chinese in the backgrounds.

HUDGEONS

I like it! I like it!

INT. 2245 MARAVILLA - NIGHT

The arc light floods the living room about the same time that Jack kicks the door in. The room is caught flush: Christmas tree, a bag of weed on the couch, two kids necking in their BVDs. MATT REYNOLDS and TAMMY JORDAN.

JACK

Police!

EXT. 2245 MARAVILLA - NIGHT

Jack exits, hauling Jordan and Reynolds by the neck. Jack stops with Grauman's FRAMED behind him and Hudgeons CLICKS off several shots with his CAMERA.

HUDGEONS

Cut! Wrap it!

Windows light up. Rubberneckers appear. Jack hands the kids to the patrolmen, heads back in with Hudgeons in tow.

INT. 2245 MARAVILLA - NIGHT

Jack scoops the pot, flips through an address book. A card falls out. "Fleur-de-Lis. Whatever you desire..." Jack looks from the card out the window at the kids being loaded into a black and white. They're both crying now.

HUDGEONS

(stantorian tone)

It's Christmas morning in the City of Angels, and while decent citizens sleep the sleep of the righteous, hopheads prowl for marijuana, not knowing that a man is coming to stop them. The free-wheeling, big-time Big V, celebrity crime-stopper, Jack Vincennes, the scourge of grasshoppers and junk fiends everywhere. You like it, Jackie- Boy?

JACK

Yeah, it's subtle.

Sid hands him a President Grant 50.

HUDGEONS

Remember: you heard it first here, off the record, on the Q.T. and very Hush-Hush.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - DISPATCH DESK - NIGHT

Suspects, mostly drunk and disorderly, are ushered through. Sgt. ED EXLEY, 30, bespectacled, is at the desk with a YOUNG OFFICER. Exley is an up-and-comer. Burning with ambition. The faster he rises through the ranks, the more resentment he leaves in his wake.

EXLEY

What's on the call sheet?

YOUNG OFFICER

A guy dressed as Santa has been exposing himself to kids in Los Feliz. Apparently, sir, he's decorated himself.

EXLEY

Decorated?

YOUNG OFFICER

With tinsel and plastic icicles
and... on his penis, sir.

EXLEY

I get the idea. You got a
description?

YOUNG OFFICER

Of his penis, sir?

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - HOLLYWOOD LIQUOR - NIGHT

Tinsel-trimmed photos of movie stars look down from the walls
as the OWNER takes an order from LYNN BRACKEN.

LYNN

A case each of gin, Scotch, and
rum. Everything top shelf. None
of that watered-down stuff you push
on Errol Flynn.

OWNER

(laughs)

Sounds like a helluva party.

Her hair kerchiefed, Lynn waits as the Owner writes it up.
There's glamour, a cat-girl grace about Lynn. She seems like
she belongs up on the wall with the movie stars. Lynn looks
across as Bud White heads toward the counter. Spotting her,
Bud doesn't look so tough for a moment.

OWNER (CONT'D)

You want it delivered?

LYNN

Before five tomorrow.

The Owner spots Bud. A big smile turns to a frown.

OWNER

I'll be right with you, Lynn.

The Owner begins indiscriminately loading hard liquor into a
cardboard box, leaving Bud and Lynn to look at each other.
Bud says the only thing he can think of.

BUD

Merry Christmas.

LYNN
Merry Christmas yourself, Officer.

BUD
That obvious, huh?

LYNN
(smiles sweetly)
It's practically stamped on your
forehead.

As the Owner bangs a case of liquor on the counter...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD LIQUOR - NIGHT

Bud exits with his booze, heads for the car. Something catches his eye. A woman in the rear passenger seat of a new Cadillac. SUSAN LEFFERTS. Both her eyes are black.

Bud starts over. The case on his hip, he motions for her to roll down the window. The driver's side door opens and bodyguard TURNER "BUZZ" MEEKS menaces his way out.

MEEKS
Get lost why don't you?

Meeks stops short as Bud shoves his badge in Meeks' face. Setting the case on the car's hood, Bud spins Meeks around, pats him down. He finds a .38 in a shoulder holster.

MEEKS (CONT'D)
I got a license for that.

Bud removes Meeks' wallet, checks the ID.

MEEKS (CONT'D)
Cut me some slack. I used to be a
cop.

BUD
Turner Meeks? Never heard of you.

LYNN
(exiting store)
We just call him Buzz.

Bud raps on Susan's window with his badge. It comes down.

BUD
You okay?

Beside her, a man leans over. Pierce Patchett, seen before at the freeway unveiling, is a man used to being chauffeured. Like FDR, he smokes his cigarette in a holder.

PATCHETT
She's fine.

BUD
(menacing)
I'm not asking you.

Patchett has no idea he's walking on thin ice. As he stares impatiently at Bud, Bud looks back to Susan.

BUD (CONT'D)
Somebody hit you?

LYNN
It's not what you think.

Bud looks to see Lynn Bracken moving to the driver's door.

BUD
What is it then?

SUSAN
You got the wrong idea, Mister. I'm fine.

Susan laughs. Patchett eases back into the shadows.

LYNN
(getting in the car)
But it's nice to know you care.

Bud considers Meeks' gun license, then hands him back the .38 and wallet. Lifting his booze, Bud watches Meeks get back in the car.

Stensland steps up as the cabbie starts to pull away.

STENSLAND
What's going on?

For an odd moment, Stensland and Meeks lock eyes.

BUD
You know him?

STENSLAND
Seen him around. He used to be a cop.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON DUDLEY SMITH

Fifty, handsome in his police captain's uniform. Singing "Silver Bells" in a beautiful low tenor. Tough, respected, Dudley goes to bed as a cop every night of his life. He's a department power to be reckoned with.

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - MUSTER ROOM - NIGHT

An L.A. Herald Express REPORTER and photographer listen along with the gathered patrolmen as Dudley finishes to applause. Dudley joins the press.

REPORTER
Captain Smith, I --

DUDLEY
Drop the formalities; it's
Christmas Eve. Call me Dudley.

REPORTER
Dudley, I came up with a title for
the story. I'm calling it "Silent
Night with the L.A.P.D."

DUDLEY
Excellent. How's this?
(dramatic pause)
The sanctity of the night is an
invitation to the darker criminal
element. Our vigilance will not be
diminished.

As the Reporter scribbles down the quote...

DUDLEY (CONT'D)
That's Smith with an S.

They laugh. Dudley points the way out.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)
This way, gentlemen.

Dudley's the last one out the door. As he goes, he turns back to give the men a wink. He's no sooner out the door when the first case of Johnny Walker is brought in.

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - DISPATCH DESK - NIGHT

Ed Exley gets another report from the Young Officer.

YOUNG OFFICER

Two police officers were assaulted
in a bar. Brown and Helenowski.

He hands the report to Exley. It's now that Dudley comes
through on his press junket.

DUDLEY

This is Sergeant Ed Exley. Son of
the legendary Preston Exley. He's
the watch commander tonight and a
damn fine job.

As the photographer snaps Exley's picture...

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

I was fortunate enough to be
partnered with his father when I
was a rookie. It makes a man feel
old. That's a fact.

(a beat)

Feel free to get a feel for the
place.

As the Reporter and photographer wander off, Dudley turns to
Exley a bit more serious.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

A word with you, lad.

INT. DUDLEY SMITH'S OFFICE - DAY

Dudley pours two drinks, hands one to Exley.

DUDLEY

To the memory of your father.

They drink. Exley looks to a photo on the wall.

Himself as a ten-year-old standing between Dudley and his
father Preston, both in police uniform.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

The day he got the Medal of Valor.
A simpler time.

Remembering, Exley invokes his father's favorite toast.

EXLEY

To the solving of crimes that
require absolute justice.

Exley raises his glass, but Dudley just watches him.

DUDLEY

That was his favorite toast.

(a beat)

I saw the test results on the lieutenant's exam. You placed first out of twenty-three.

EXLEY

The youngest applicant by eight years.

DUDLEY

You'll make lieutenant inside a year. Patrol division?

EXLEY

I was thinking Detective Bureau.

We can see Dudley doesn't approve.

DUDLEY

You don't have the eye for human weakness to be a good detective. Or the stomach. You're a political animal, Edmund.

The criticism stings, but Dudley's a straight shooter.

EXLEY

You're wrong.

DUDLEY

Am I...? Would you be willing to plant corroborative evidence on a suspect you knew was guilty in order to ensure an indictment?

EXLEY

Dudley, we've been over this.

DUDLEY

Answer yes or no.

EXLEY

I... No.

DUDLEY

Would you be willing to rig crime scene evidence to support a prosecuting attorney's working hypothesis...? Yes or no, Edmund.

EXLEY

No.

DUDLEY

Would you be willing to beat confessions out of suspects you knew to be guilty?

EXLEY

No.

DUDLEY

Would you be willing to shoot hardened criminals in the back to offset the chance --

EXLEY

No.

DUDLEY

Then for God's sake, don't be a detective. Stick to assignments where you won't have to make those choices. Patrol, Internal Affairs, but not the Bureau.

EXLEY

I know you mean well, Dudley, but I don't need to do it the way you did. Or my father.

DUDLEY

At least get rid of the glasses. I can't think of one Bureau man who wears them.

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - MUSTER ROOM - NIGHT

A large impromptu bar has been set-up. The party is in full swing, the floor packed with nightwatch blues. A PHONOGRAPH SPEWS DIRTY CHRISTMAS CAROLS.

Stensland pours eggnog and Old Crow into the water cooler as Bud elbows his way in with another case.

STENSLAND

Hey, partner. Grab a cup.

BUD

I got to write my report first.

PASSING COP #1

Hear about Helenowski and Brown? They got into a helluva scrap with six taco benders at some bar.

(MORE)

PASSING COP #1 (CONT'D)
 Helenowski lost six pints of blood.
 Brown's in a coma.

PASSING COP #2
 We ought to teach Paco and his
 friends a lesson.

More cops voice their agreement. Bottles are passed. Only Bud doesn't seem as caught-up as the rest.

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - NARCO PEN - NIGHT

Jack Vincennes at his desk. Holding the Fleur-de-Lis card, Jack dials the number. A corkboard on the wall is posted with press clippings. "Dope Crusader Wounded in Shootout." "Actor Mitchum Seized in Marijuana Shack Raid." That one includes a shot of Jack ushering Mitchum into jail.

WOMAN (V.O.)
 (over phone, like silk)
 Whatever you desire.

JACK
 Hi... I'd like to get a delivery to
 Beverly Hills.

WOMAN (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 I don't think I know you.

CLICK. The line goes dead. Jack redials.

WOMAN (V.O.)
 (over phone)
 Whatever you desire.

JACK
 Look, a friend of mine gave me this
 number. I just --

The line goes dead again. Jack dials a new number.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
 (filtered)
 Pacific Coast Bell.

JACK
 This is Sgt. Vincennes. Requesting
 a name and address on a phone
 number. Hollywood zero-one- two-
 three-nine.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
(filtered)
Please hold the line... No such
number is assigned.

JACK
I just called it.

OPERATOR (V.O.)
No, Sergeant. I checked twice.

JACK
(realizes, hangs up)
A bootleg...

INT. MUSTER ROOM - NIGHT

Exley surveys the carousing rowdies. Raising his voice...

EXLEY
All right, men. You've had your
fun. Time to break it up.

The party continues undiminished. From across the room,
Stensland eyes Exley with disdain.

STENSLAND
Fucking Exley. Guy's got a pole so
far up his ass, every time he farts
the flag waves.

WATCH COMMANDER'S OFFICE

The command not really his, Exley reads a report, ignores the
party, though his window looks into the thick of it.

Suddenly a ripple goes through the room. The men begin to
push out through a rear door. Exley stands, stops a

COP.

EXLEY
What's going on?

COP
They got the spics who japped
Helenowski and Brown. Helenowski
lost an eye and Brown's got brain
damage.

EXLEY

I have the report right here.
They're home with bruises and
muscle pulls -- Oh shit...

Exley starts out after them.

INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

Stensland in the lead. Pulling out a blackjack, he enters Cell #4, begins wailing on one of the Mexicans -- Dinardo.

STENSLAND

For ours, Pancho. And you're
getting off easy.

Cheered on by drunks in the tank and his fellow officers, Stensland goes wild. He's joined by Lentz, Crumley and Tristano. Shaking his head, Jack Vincennes moves away.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

Bud types his report with one finger. Jack looks in.

JACK

White, you better get a lease on
Stens before he kills someone.

INT. CELL BLOCK - NIGHT

Followed by Jack, Bud forces his way through the crowd. The men who see it's him quickly clear a path.

Swigging from a pint of gin, Stensland works skinny GARCIA. Head saps. The kid drops to his knees drooling blood.

Bud grabs Stensland, hauls him off of Garcia who looks up.

GARCIA

Fuck you, pendejo.

BUD

Yeah yeah...

GARCIA

And fuck your mother too.

Bud sees red. Letting go of Stensland, Bud White picks up Garcia by the neck. There are cheers, "Attaboys" and "Holy Fucks" as Bud bangs Garcia's head on the ceiling.

EXLEY
 (arriving)
 Stop, Officer! That's an order!

Cops block Exley's way. As Bud looks over, Garcia kicks him in the balls. A dangling shot. Bud keels into the bars, Garcia stumbles out of the cell, smack into Jack.

Jack looks down aghast at blood on his cashmere blazer, then puts Garcia down with a left-right.

Exley pulls a pad of paper and pen from his pocket.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
 You're going in my report! All of you!

Exley has just started taking names when Bud grabs him by the scruff of the neck and hauls him off balance into...

HALL
 As Exley struggles, a cop opens the door to the store room. Bud slings Exley inside, then slams the door tight. Exley is locked in. As Bud moves off, we hear

POUNGING.

EXLEY (V.O.)
 Let me out! That's an order!

CELL BLOCK
 The Herald Reporter and photographer enter unchaperoned and unnoticed. Stensland swings like a madman. That's when a flashbulb goes off. Freezing everyone in black and white.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY

The CHIEF sits behind a desk in a four-star uniform. Dudley Smith sits to his left, D.A. Ellis Loew to his right. Seen earlier at the Mickey Cohen press conference, Loew is the only civilian. Bud White stands across from them. There to be judged.

CHIEF

Officer White, you've refused to cooperate with Internal Affairs. But you should know this is bigger than a police board. Indictments may be handed down. Quite frankly, we need police witnesses to offset the damage done to the Department's image. Will you testify?

Bud glances to a gray tinted mirror, then to the Chief.

BUD

No, sir. I won't.

The Chief sighs, looks to Loew.

CHIEF

District Attorney Loew.

Loew steps to Bud, holds up a newspaper with the cell block photo. The headline: "BLOODY CHRISTMAS."

LOEW

Bloody Christmas. The press love to label. You and Officer Stensland brought the liquor into the precinct. Stensland was already drunk. Do you see how appearing as a voluntary witness against him could offset the damage you've done to yourself?

BUD

I won't do it.

(staring at mirror)

I won't testify against my partner or anyone else.

LOEW

This man is a disgrace.

CHIEF

Your badge and gun, Officer.

Bud sets them on The Chief's desk.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

This is the new L.A.P.D., White. You're suspended from duty and dismissed.

Turning, White shoots the mirror a stiff middle finger as he makes his way out. Dudley Smith hides a smile.

OTHER SIDE OF GLASS

Exley watches, involuntarily leans back as Bud passes on the other side of the glass.

THE CHIEF'S OFFICE

Dudley, Loew and The Chief wait as Exley enters.

CHIEF

Ed, your observations have been astute. What's your assessment of this situation?

EXLEY

The public demands justice, sir. This was a full-fledged riot of policemen. Shift the guilt to men whose pensions are secured. Force them to retire. But someone has to swing. Indict, try and convict Stensland and Bud White. Secure them jail time. Feed them to the sharks, sir. Protect yourself; protect the department.

Dudley gives Exley a look. He's angry with him.

DUDLEY

Stensland's a disgrace. Straight D fitness reports from every C.O. he ever served under. But White is a valuable officer.

EXLEY

White's a mindless thug.

DUDLEY

No, Edmund. He's a man who can answer yes to those questions I ask you from time to time.

The Chief interrupts with his own concern.

CHIEF

I want to know who we give the public in contrast? The department needs role models. Clean-cut, forthright men the public can admire.

EXLEY

I'll testify, sir. I'm not afraid to do what's right.

CHIEF

And I'll promote you. You'll be a lieutenant immediately.

Exley seizes the moment, going over Dudley's head.

EXLEY

Detective lieutenant.

The Chief and Dudley exchange a look. Neither approves.

CHIEF

Ed, you're 30. Your father didn't make lieutenant until he was 33.

EXLEY

I know that, sir. I also know that when he made lieutenant, it was as a detective.

LOEW

(interrupting)

Before we start polishing our laurels, it would look better if we had a corroborative witness.

DUDLEY

That'll be hard to come by. The men hate a turncoat.

EXLEY

Jack Vincennes. He's the technical advisor on 'Badge of Honor,' sir. He lives for it. That's the way to get him.

CHIEF

All right, Ed.
(into desk intercom)
Call Sergeant Vincennes.

As Exley starts out, Dudley pulls him aside, speaks low.

DUDLEY

You'll reap the benefits, but are you truly prepared to be despised within the department?

EXLEY

Yes, Dudley. I am.

DUDLEY

So be it.

JACK VINCENNES

Looking sharp, he strides down the hall, enters the...

CHIEF'S OFFICE

Round two. Centred on Jack. Exley is gone.

DUDLEY

Sergeant, we'll get right to it. Nine civilian witnesses have identified you as hitting Ezekiel Garcia.

LOEW

But my office has a stellar witness who will tell the grand jury that you hit back only after being hit.

JACK

What do I have to do?

LOEW

Testify against the three officers who have already earned their pensions. Our key witness will testify roundly, but you can plead ignorance to questions directed at the other men.

CHIEF

I'll guarantee you a slap on the wrist. A brief suspension followed by a temporary transfer from Narcotics to Ad Vice.

(a beat)

When you transfer out of Vice, you'll be back on the show.

JACK

The show, sir?

CHIEF

Badge of Honor, Vincennes. We need to tone down your profile for a bit.

The Chief just got Jack where he lives.

DUDLEY

John, I doubt you've ever drawn a stupid breath. Don't start now.

JACK

Okay. I'll do it.

Smiles all around. Loew smiles at the two-way. A move not lost on Jack who wonders who might be on the other side.

CHIEF

Dismissed, Vincennes.

Jack leaves. The Chief steps to the mirror, looks through.

CHIEF (CONT'D)

So be it. Detective Lieutenant.

OTHER SIDE OF GLASS

Exley clenches his fist in victory. The Chief continues.

CHIEF

Ace them at the grand jury tomorrow, son. Wear the smart-looking suit and ace them. And, Ed? Lose the glasses.

INT. ROOM 114 (GRAND JURY WITNESS ROOM) - DAY

Glasses off, Exley waits, looks up as Jack enters.

JACK

You're the key witness?

EXLEY

That's right.

JACK

I should've known. What's the Chief throwing you?

EXLEY

Throwing me?

JACK

Yeah, Exley. What's the payoff?

EXLEY

You're the payoff expert. I'm just doing my duty.

JACK

You're playing an angle, college boy. You're getting something out of this so you don't have to hobnob with the fucking rank and file cops who'll hate your guts for snitching. If they're making you a detective, watch out. Some Bureau guys are gonna burn in this and you're gonna have to work with friends of theirs.

EXLEY

What about you?

JACK

I'm snitching three old timers who'll be fishing in Oregon next week. Next to you I'm clean. And smart.

At that, a CLERK steps in from the hallway.

CLERK

Edmund J. Exley to chambers.

As Exley's about to go...

JACK

Just remember, Bud White'll fuck you for this if it takes the rest of his life. They already suspended him. Just pray he cops a deal and stays on the Department because that is one civilian you do not want on your case.

INT. TWILIGHT LOUNGE - NIGHT

An old black guy in a frayed, threadbare tux plays piano. Bud, nursing a highball at the bar, steps over to a REDHEAD with too much make-up on too many miles.

BUD

That an old fashioned you're drinking?

(as she nods)

My name's Bud.

REDHEAD

Nobody was born with the name Bud.

BUD
They stick you with a name like
Wendell, you look for an alias.

REDHEAD
What do you do, Bud?

BUD
I'm sorta between jobs. Look, what
do you say we, uh...

A hand on Bud's shoulder. He turns to see Dudley Smith.

DUDLEY
Lad, may I have a word with you?

BUD
This business, Captain?

DUDLEY
Say goodnight to your friend and
join me by those back tables.

Dudley starts off. Bud turns back to Redhead, but she's
already talking to a sailor.

BOOTH
Dudley sits at a table. A
newspaper is opened, a little mound
underneath. Bud joins Dudley.

BUD
Does that paper say we've been
indicted? Does it say Exley's a
hero for squealing me and Stensland
off?

DUDLEY
He made his play and he got what he
wanted. They're making him a
detective.

BUD
Captain, what do you want?

DUDLEY
Call me Dudley.

BUD
Dudley, what do you want?

DUDLEY

Lad, I admire your refusal to testify and your loyalty to your partner. I admire you as a policeman, particularly your adherence to violence as a necessary adjutant to the job. And I am most impressed with your punishment of wife beaters. Do you hate them, Wendell?

BUD

(looks away)
Yeah, I hate them.

DUDLEY

And for good reason judging from what I know of your background.

Bud looks back over. Dudley's getting too personal.

BUD

What's going to happen to Stensland? He'll give himself cirrhosis over this. He's one year from his pension.

DUDLEY

It would've happened years ago if you hadn't carried him. Why the loyalty, Wendell?

BUD

He helped me out once. That's all.

DUDLEY

Your partner's through. Department scapegoat on the Chief's orders. He's been billed, he'll be indicted and he'll swing.

BUD

Him and me both. Fucking Exley.

DUDLEY

Don't underestimate his skills. As a politician he exceeds even myself. But the department needs smart men like Exley and... direct men like yourself

BUD

What do you want?

DUDLEY

Wendell, I want you to come to work
for me.

BUD

Doing what? Mowing your fucking
lawn?

Smith yanks the newspaper revealing Bud's badge & .38
Special. Bud can't believe his eyes.

DUDLEY

They're yours. Take them.

BUD

I knew you had juice, but...
There's no goddamn bill on me?

DUDLEY

Four of the defendants recanted
their testimony.

BUD

How?

Dudley dismisses the question with a wave of his hand.

DUDLEY

I need you for an assignment the
Chief's given me the go-ahead on. A
duty few men are fit for, but you
were born for. You'll be working
out of Homicide.

BUD

(excited)
Homicide? A detective?

CHIEF

Your talents lie elsewhere,
Wendell. It's a muscle job and
shooting job. You'll do what I say
and not ask questions. Do you
follow my drift?

BUD

(disappointed)
In Technicolor.

DUDLEY

Will you work for me?

BUD

Of course... But how?

DUDLEY
How what, Wendell?

BUD
How'd you get them to retract?

Dudley lays brass knuckles on the table. They're chipped, caked with blood.

DISSOLVE TO:

L.A. MONTAGE

Over the pop song "STRANGER IN PARADISE."

A) EXT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE - NIGHT

Frank Sinatra at the premiere of From Here to Eternity.

B) INT. KLUB ZAMBOANGA - NIGHT

Charlie "Bird" Parker makes magic before an appreciative, mostly black crowd.

C) TORCH SONG TAVERN (RIVERSIDE) - NIGHT

Nate Janklow exits with his latest flame. A mob lieutenant, Nate was last seen with Mickey Cohen outside the Federal Courthouse in the opening montage. A CAR SCREECHES up. TWO GUNS aim and Nate and his date do down in a proverbial HAIL OF LEAD.

D) EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

A groundbreaking. The Mayor scrapes at the ground with a gold shovel. Pierce Patchett is among the distinguished guests.

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

The marquee gushes: "Today Sgt. Joe Reno: Badge of Honor Star Brett Chase."

INT. HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

A nerdy 14-YEAR-OLD asks Brett Chase:

Why'd you become a policeman?

CHASE

I'm not a policeman. I just play one on television. But I think I can answer for them. To help people. That's why I do the show.

Chase looks over and winks at Jack who waits in the wings.

CHASE (CONT'D)

To protect and serve. It's not just a motto.

As the kids applaud, Chase joins Jack who gives him a quick drag of a cigarette. A nervous PA joins them. Chase points out a fetching girl in the second row.

CHASE (CONT'D)

That one. In the sweater.
(to Jack)
They also serve who only stand and wait.

Chase and Jack watch the PA ask "Sweater" a question while pointing to Chase. Maybe sixteen, she nods "yes" eagerly.

CHASE (CONT'D)

Jack, I'll see you Monday on set.

JACK

I won't be there. They're toning down my profile.

PRINTING PRESS

The latest issue of Hush-Hush flies through. On the cover: "Gail Russell Caught In Love Nest. Nymph or No?"

INT. CITY JAIL - DAY

Bud White flips through today's booking slips, finds one that's interesting. Reading to himself...

BUD
Domestic. Assault and battery.

Containment Squad strong-arms, BREUNING and CARLISLE pause as they pass.

CARLISLE
Ready to go, Bud?

BUD
I'll be there in five minutes.

CITY JAIL - HALLWAY

Bud walks to a door covered in sheet metal. He opens it to reveal a holding tank with a burly, jumpsuited

PRISONER.

BUD
I hear you like to hit women.

PRISONER
My wife. She's dropping charges so
it's none of your business.

Bud enters, closes the door behind him. A beat, we hear the sounds of FISTS ON FLESH. It's Bud's business now.

INT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

Deuce Perkins (the Mickey Cohen narcotics lieutenant seen earlier) stands at the bookshelf. He pulls down books to reveal a shoe box. He sets it on his desk, pulls back the cover to reveal several bags of white powder. Heroin.

A BRANCH SNAPS outside. Perkins opens a drawer, fishes a revolver. Turning off the light, he heads to the window. His finger parts the curtains. At that instant, he staggers, falls as GUNFIRE rips into him.

The heroin just sits there on the desk.

EXT. McNEIL PENITENTIARY - DAY

Grim-faced guards scan the yard from machine-gunned towers.

INT. McNEIL PENITENTIARY - VISITOR BOOTH - DAY

Mickey Cohen sits across from visitor Johnny Stompanato. Cohen is going off the handle.

COHEN

What do you mean Deuce Perkins got clipped last night?!

STOMPANATO

They shot him in his library.

COHEN

I don't want a floor plan; I want to know who! Who's taking the ticket for this, Johnny?

STOMPANATO

Nobody. At least not yet.

COHEN

And what about the merchandise Deuce was holding for me?

STOMPANATO

Gone. Not a trace.

COHEN

Some ferstunkener is moving in and we don't know who?! Maybe we should ask Hedda Hopper!

As "STRANGER IN PARADISE" ENDS, so does the MONTAGE.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - AD VICE - DAY

Addressing the squad, a no-nonsense VICE CAPTAIN picks up a stack of magazines.

VICE CAPTAIN

Picture-book smut, gentlemen. There's been a bunch of it found at collateral crime scenes lately. Mostly narcotics and prostitution collars.

As the Vice Capt. hands it out for the men to examine, new member Jack Vincennes arrives late.

VICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Look who's back from suspension. We're honored, Sergeant Jack.

The men laugh. Jack sits, flips a magazine. Men and women. Men and men. Girls and girls. Girls and horses.

JACK

Gee. The Great Jerk-Off Book Caper
of 1953.

VICE CAPTAIN

Vincennes, is there someplace you'd
rather be?

JACK

Yeah, Cap. Back in Narcotics.

VICE CAPTAIN

Oh? Anyplace else?

JACK

Working whores with squad two.

VICE CAPTAIN

Maybe you should have thought of
that before you made Bloody
Christmas page one.

Vice Capt. retrieves the magazines, hands them to Jack.

VICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

They're yours. Make a major case,
Sergeant. It's the only way you're
getting out of here.

Exaggerated "oohs" and "aahs" from the men.

VICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Dismissed, gentlemen.

As they go, Jack sees the books are stamped: "Fleur-de-Lis
Whatever you desire." Jack takes the matching business card
from his wallet, the one he found on Christmas Eve.

VICE CAPTAIN (CONT'D)

Roll, Vincennes. No sidetracks.
This is Ad Vice, not Narco.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - NARCO PEN - DAY

Jack Vincennes is at his desk. Holding the Fleur-de-Lis
card, magazines spread before him, Jack dials the number.

INT. HUSH-HUSH MAGAZINE OFFICE - DAY

Sid Hudgeons sits behind his desk, answers the phone.

HUDGEONS

Hush-Hush. Off the record and on the Q.T.

JACK (V.O.)

Sid, it's Vincennes.

HUDGEONS

Jackie, are you back on Narco? I need copy.

INTERCUT WITH Jack at his desk:

JACK

No. But I've got something going with Ad Vice.

HUDGEONS

Something good?

JACK

Don't know. I'm chasing picture books. Fuck shots, but the posers don't look like junkies. It's well done stuff. I thought you might have heard something.

Hudgeons reaches into a stack of papers, pulls out a magazine like the one Jack has.

HUDGEONS

Not a word.

JACK

What about Fleur-de-Lis? Their slogan's 'Whatever you desire.'

HUDGEONS

No. No, I've heard bupkis. Jack, I'll talk to you later. Call me when you get something I can use. Smut's from hunger. For sad sacks who can't get their ashes hauled

The LINE CLICKS off. Jack hesitates a moment before cradling the receiver. Something's not right here.

EXT. HOLYWOOD STATION - PARKING LOT - TWILIGHT

As Exley pulls in, his two-way drones:

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Park Rangers report three Negro youths discharging shotguns into the air in Griffith Park. Suspects are driving a late model purple Mercury Coupe.

As the report ends, Exley switches off the two-way and gets out of his car.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

Accompanied by Bud, Dick Stensland crams the contents of his desk into a box. Well-wishing cops pat him on the back, offer words of encouragement, but Stensland looks like he's going to cry.

It's very bad timing as Exley enters, comes face-to-face with them. This is hatred.

Acting on impulse, Bud goes after Exley. It's a mauling. Four vicious body shots. A potentially lethal head shot sails wide as Exley falls to the ground.

As four men move to hold Bud back, Exley looks up at him.

EXLEY

(gasping)

You're just a thug, White. That's all you'll ever be.

Dudley steps into the fray. He helps Exley to his feet.

DUDLEY

You should stay away from a man when his blood is up.

EXLEY

His blood's always up.

Four cops are genuinely having trouble holding Bud back. Dudley watches with something bordering on admiration.

DUDLEY

Then maybe you should stay away from him all the time.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Accompanied by Bud, Stensland reaches his car, loads his box of stuff into the trunk. Bud is moody, pensive.

STENSLAND

Don't look so down in the mouth,
Bud. You nailed him good.

BUD

Yeah, sure... I got a couple of
hours before I have to be at the
Victory. Want to grab a beer?

STENSLAND

Rain check me, partner. I got
something big going on tonight.

BUD

What? That new mystery girl you've
been seeing?

STENSLAND

No. I'll tell you sometime. Not
now. Don't want to jinx it. But
it could take the edge off that
jail time I got coming.

BUD

What are you talking about?

STENSLAND

It's confidential, Bud. Like that
magazines Vincennes scams for. Hush-
Hush.

(smiles)

I'll see you tomorrow. And hey, if
it works out, you'll get a piece of
it.

Stensland gets in the car, drives off. Bud is left alone.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

Exley sits alone in a sea of desks. The SQUAWK BOX DRONES.
Exley squints at the clock on the wall, can't make it out.
He takes his glasses from the inside of his jacket. 2:00
A.M. Finally, something to do. He walks to the wall
calendar, tears off Feb. 28 to reveal Mar. 1.

As Exley sits, the call SQUAWK BOX booms to life.

VOICE

Squad call! Nite Owl Coffee Shop
One-eight-one-two-four Cherokee!
Multiple homicides! Multiple
homicides! Code three!

EXT. HOLLYWOOD AND CHEROKEE - NIGHT

Patrol cars. Blues setting up a crime scene blockade. Exley pulls up, DOUSES his SIREN. PATROLMAN #1 runs over.

PATROLMAN #1
Loads of people down. Men. Women.
I stopped for coffee --

Exley pushes him aside, heads for the door. It's wide open.

INT. NITE OWL - NIGHT

Exley takes mental snapshots. Ten stools front a counter. The side wall mural-papered: winking owls perched on street signs. On the right a string of tables. Three in disarray. Food spilled, dishes broken. A high-heel pump by an upended chair.

Heel drag marks across the linoleum floor heading back toward the kitchen. Exley follows. Past an open, empty cash register. Outside -- SIRENS.

SERVICE RUNWAY
Crisscrossed drag marks connect,
lead to a walk-in...

FOOD LOCKER
Blood-soaked bodies on the floor.
Five, maybe six in a tangle.
Dozens of shotgun shells float in
the pools of blood. As Exley
struggles to maintain his
composure...

ROOKIE (O.S.)
Holy shit fuck...

Exley looks at a green-faced ROOKIE in the locker doorway.

ROOKIE (CONT'D)
S-s-sir, there's a captain outside
wants to see you.

EXLEY
Don't get sick! Not in here!

Exley shoves the Rookie, puking, out the door.

EXT. NITE OWL - NIGHT

Patrolmen hold back a swarm of reporters and rubber-neckers. HORNS BLAST. Motorcycles run interference for meat wagons cut off by the crown. As Ed emerges, reporters surge, shout questions. Exley hurries past, finds Dudley in command and barking orders.

EXLEY

Sir, I took the call. It's my case.

DUDLEY

Edmund, you don't want it and you can't have it.

EXLEY

Yes, I do, sir.

DUDLEY

It's mine. I'll make you my second in command.

Exley spots a photographer moving in. He looks properly serious as the flash bulb pops.

INT. NIGHT OWL - NIGHT

Forensics Chief RAY PINKER walks Exley and Dudley through.

PINKER

We got a total of forty-five spent Remington shotgun shells. Three men with five-shot-capacity pumps. All of them reloading twice.

EXLEY

Hold on... We need to canvass. See if a purple Mercury was seen around here tonight.

DUDLEY

Why?

EXLEY

We got a call earlier on three Negro youths. Firing shotguns in Griffith Park from a late-model purple Mercury Coupe.

DUDLEY

(to his adjutant)
Get on it.

A FORENSICS COP approaches Pinker.

FORENSICS COP
We got an I.D. on one of the
victims, sir... I think it's Dick
Stensland.

Exley and Dudley react, look at each other.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - DAWN

Set in a no-man's-land of bulldozed homes. A sign proudly announces the impending arrival of the freeway. The motel is surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. Abandoned but for a pair of LAPD cars and a light burning in room 6.

An unmarked pulls up and Exley and Dudley step out. They start forward, but a SCREAM inside 6 stops Exley short.

DUDLEY
With Mickey Cohen in prison, Los
Angeles is organized crime free.
The Chief wants it to stay that
way, Edmund. The means are not for
the weak-hearted.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM 6 - DAWN

Bare. A table and chair bolted to the floor. A tough FLAT-NOSED GANGSTER is cuffed to the hot seat. On the table are a .45 and a fat roll of \$100 bills.

Breuning and Carlisle watch as Bud White delivers a couple of short, stiff body shots. Flatnose is not used to being on the receiving end. All the same, we get the idea Bud's a bit reluctant.

Bud's back is to Dudley and Exley who enter behind him.

DUDLEY
Come, Wendell, you can do better
than that.

Bud turns, sees Exley and Dudley. A beat. As Bud looms over Flatnose, the gangster babbles. Snitch-frenzied.

FLATNOSE
I know things. I hear things. Like
with the Mick inside, things are on
this weird slowdown.

FLATNOSE (CONT'D)

These shooter teams, bang bang
bang, they're 86-ing Mickey Cohen's
men.

DUDLEY

We know all that, lad. Tell us,
who do these shooters work for?

FLATNOSE

I don't know. No one knows. Maybe
they're mavericks. You want a
prostie roust? Huh? Some narco
action?

(breaking down)

What do you want?!

DUDLEY

We want you to go home.

(to Breuning)

Uncuff him, Michael.

Dudley turns to Exley.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

Mr. Sifakis is a known loan shark
from San Francisco. He arrived
this afternoon at Union Station.
Looking for business opportunities
in our fair city. An organized
crime associate in need of re-
education in the ways of polite
society.

Uncuffed, Flatnose rubs his wrists. Wary. As Breuning steps
back, Flatnose snatches the .45 off the table.

FLATNOSE

Motherfuckers!

Exley dives for cover, but the other four cops just stand
there. Dudley looks down on the floor at Exley.

DUDLEY

It's part of the play, Edmund. A
sincerity test.

Flatnose looks at the gun a beat, then squeezes the TRIGGER.
CLICK CLICK. No bullets.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

(to Breuning)

Sit him back down.

CLICK, CLICK. They shove Flatnose back in the hot seat. Dudley offers a hand to Exley, helps him to his feet.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

Wendell, you need to accompany Detective Lieutenant Exley on official police business. I'll finish up here.

INT. EXLEY'S PLYMOUTH - DAY

They drive in silence. No love lost here. Finally.

BUD

Where are we going?

EXLEY

It's a surprise. You like surprises, don't you, White?

EXT. COUNTY MORGUE - DAY

Exley pulls up. Bud looks to him. Really curious now.

INT. COUNTY MORGUE - HALLWAY - DAY

Exley and Bud walk. An orderly wheels a covered corpse toward them from the other end of the hall. Bud's spooked. The orderly wheels the body in to the examination room.

As Bud and Exley pass, the CORONER pulls back the sheet, is surprised at the sight of a woman who we don't quite see.

CORONER

Call me crazy, but for a second I thought it was Rita Hayworth.

MORGUE MEAT LOCKER

Exley and Bud walk past a wall of drawers to where a coroner's assistant waits.

EXLEY

We need you to I.D. the body. There's no next of kin and you knew him best. So tell me...

The assistant pulls open drawer 12. A naked man.

A tag on his toe and half his face blown off.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
Is that Dick Stensland?

Stunned, Bud stares at what's left of his old partner.

BUD
Yeah, that's Stens.

EXLEY
Hell of a way to avoid a prison sentence.

Bud's torn between wanting to smash Exley and finding out why Stensland is dead. He squeezes out the words.

BUD
What happened?

EXLEY
Someone held up a coffee shop,
panicked and killed six people.

Then, from the hall...

WOMAN (O.S.)
Not my baby! Not my little girl!

INT. COUNTY MORGUE - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

HILDA LEFFERTS, 50, enters with the coroner to ID the body of her daughter, Susan.

There's stray buckshot in the upper chest and shoulders, but a sheet hides the real damage. It's the girl Bud saw outside Hollywood Liquor. Without the black eyes, she does look like Rita Hayworth.

As Bud and Exley appear, Mrs. Lefferts looks confused.

CORONER
Is this your daughter, Mrs. Lefferts?

MRS. LEFFERTS
I -- I don't know.

EXLEY
We know this is difficult. Just take your time and look again.

Exley doesn't realize, but Bud recognizes the deceased.

MRS. LEFFERTS

It seems like my Susan, but...

EXLEY

When was the last time you saw her,
Mrs. Lefferts?

MRS. LEFFERTS

At Christmas. We had fought. I
didn't like her boyfriend. I --
she has a birthmark on her hip.

The Coroner lifts the sheet. Mrs. Lefferts gasps.

MRS. LEFFERTS (CONT'D)

It's her. My baby. Dear God...

As Mrs. Lefferts swoons, Bud and Exley both hold her up.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

The room buzzes, jammed to the rafters with every detective standing ready. The Chief waits as Dudley Smith takes the mike, holds up an L.A. Times headline.

DUDLEY

'Nite Owl Massacre.' Hyperbole
aside, this is a heinous crime that
requires a swift resolution. The
public will demand it and this
department will provide it. Six
victims. One of them, one of our
own -- Dick Stensland.

(as the cops react)

As it happens, he was a Nite Owl
regular. In the wrong place at the
wrong time.

Bud White listens, not too sure. Stensland said he had
something big going on...

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

Robbery looks like the motive. We
have rubber glove prints on the
register and preliminary forensics
strongly lean toward a trio of
gunmen. We do have one hot lead,
so listen well. Three Negro youths
were seen last night discharging
shotguns in the air at Griffith
Park.

A park ranger I.D.ed them as driving a 1948 to 1950 Mercury Coupe, purple in color. An hour ago, a canvassing crew found a news vendor who saw a purple Merc Coupe parked across from the Nite Owl around 3:00 A.M.

The room goes loud, a big rumbling. Dudley holds up a list.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

The D.M.V. worked all night to get us a registration list on '48 to '50 purple Mercs. There are 142 registered to Negroes in L.A. County. Fifty two-man teams will shake three names apiece. Hot suspects you'll bring here. Interrogation rooms have been set up. They'll be run by Lieutenant Edmund Exley. Hollywood Squad.

Catcalls. Boos. The Chief steps to the mike.

CHIEF

Enough on that. Gentlemen, just go out and get them. Use all necessary force. The people of Los Angeles demand it.

The men exchange knowing looks. The real message: kill them clean. Exley doesn't approve. As the men hurry out...

EXLEY

He might as well have put a bounty on them.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Detectives pairing up and moving out. Scanning his three name list, Bud joins his PARTNER for the day.

BUD

Can you take them? I got I got something I gotta do.

PARTNER

Christ, I don't know. What if one of these names...

BUD

What I gotta do is for Stensland. My partner.

The guy looks at him a beat, nods. As Bud heads off...

EXLEY

watches everyone go. Wishes he could be part of the action. He spots Jack talking to his REDNECK partner for for the day.

JACK AND REDNECK

Redneck chews tobacco, has a Texas drawl.

REDNECK

Where to, Trash?

JACK

If we go by the list, we have about zero chance of making the collar. But I know a guy who knows what's going on south of Jefferson. I'm betting he could put us at 50/50.

REDNECK

I don't know...

As Redneck thinks, Exley steps up. He's overheard.

EXLEY

I'll take those odds.
(to Redneck)
Take off. We got it from here.

Jack stares. Redneck shrugs, spits tobacco juice in a cup.

REDNECK

Between the two of you guys, you should bring along a photographer.

INT. HOLLYWOOD LIQUOR - DAY

Last time we saw the Owner was Christmas Eve. He looks up from a customer as Bud strides in, badge out front.

BUD

I need an address on a customer of yours. Her name was Lynn.

OWNER

That's all I have to go on?

BUD

Yeah. And I think you already know who I mean, so cough it up.

OWNER

Lynn Bracken. There's a billing address and a delivery address.

BUD

Give me both. Billing first.

EXT. 1184 GRETNA GREEN, BRENTWOOD (PATCHETT'S) - DAY

A big, pink Spanish mansion with lots of tile. Also last seen outside Hollywood Liquor on Christmas Eve, Pierce Patchett is in the front yard, chipping golf balls over a koi pond. They land in a tight grouping. As he tees up:

BUD (O.S.)

You must slay 'em at the country club.

Bud's halfway up the walk. Patchett sees the cuffs hooked to his belt. Patchett is cool as can be.

BUD (CONT'D)

Are you Pierce Patchett?

PATCHETT

I am. Are you soliciting for police charities? The last time, you people called at my office.

BUD

I'm a homicide detective. Where were you last night?

PATCHETT

I was here, hosting a party. Who was killed and why do you think I can help?

BUD

Richard Stensland.

PATCHETT

I don't know him. Mr...

BUD

Officer White. How about Susan Lefferts? You know her?

PATCHETT

(sighs, concedes)

You know I do or you wouldn't be here. How did you find me?

BUD

We met outside Hollywood Liquors on Christmas Eve. This is where Lynn Bracken's booze bills go.

PATCHETT

Of course...

BUD

Sue Lefferts died at the Nite Owl. I'm investigating.

Patchett studies Bud a beat, weighing his options. Patchett's burly BODYGUARD starts over from the house.

BODYGUARD

Everything alright, Mr. Patchett?

PATCHETT

(waves him off)

Fine, Philip. Thank you.

BUD

Where's the other guy? Buzz.

PATCHETT

He no longer works for me.

(a beat)

Find Susan's killer, Mr. White. I'll give you a handsome reward. Whatever you desire.

If only Jack had been around to hear that.

BUD

Thanks, but no thanks.

PATCHETT

Against your code?

BUD

I don't have one. Lefferts looked beat-up Christmas Eve, but didn't act it. How come?

PATCHETT

Do you care about criminal matters peripheral to Susan's murder?

BUD

No.

PATCHETT

Then you wouldn't feel obligated to report them?

BUD

That's right.

PATCHETT

Then listen closely, because I'll only say this once and if it gets repeated, I'll deny it. I run call girls. Lynn Bracken is one of them and so was Susan Lefferts. I treat my girls very well. I have grown daughters, myself, and I don't like the thought of women being hurt. I sense you share this feeling.

BUD

(ignores comment)

Why were Lefferts' eyes black?

PATCHETT

I think she'd been hit in the face with a tennis racket. She is -- was -- a big doubles fan.

BUD

You wanna go downtown and discuss this officially?

PATCHETT

Wait. Our deal still holds?

Bud nods, his patience running thin.

PATCHETT (CONT'D)

I needed a Rita Hayworth to fill out my little studio.

BUD

What little studio?

PATCHETT

There's Gardner, Hepburn, Grable, Turner. Lynn Bracken is my Veronica Lake. I use girls who look like movie stars. Sometimes I employ a plastic surgeon.

BUD

That's why her mother couldn't I.D. her... Jesus fucking Christ.

PATCHETT

No, Mr. White. Pierce Morehouse Patchett. Now, I sense you're on your best behavior, but that's all I'll give you. If you persist, I'll meet you with my attorney. Now, would you like Miss Bracken's address? I doubt she knows anything, but --

BUD

I got her address.

PATCHETT

Of course... this is personal with you, isn't it, Mr. White?

Bud turns, heads down the walk. Patchett hits his golf ball. It lands just past the koi pond, with the rest. Ice.

EXT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM, LOS FELIZ (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - DAY

A modern-looking triplex. A projector's flicker strobes against the closed curtains. We hear a PHONE RING.

INT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - DAY

The film is This Gun For Hire with Alan Ladd and Veronica Lake. It's projected on a wall in front of which stands Lynn Bracken and an OLDER GENTLEMAN, in his underwear. Lynn's long, blonde hair hangs down over one eye. She looks more like Veronica Lake than Veronica Lake. The film flashes over them as they kiss.

The PHONE RINGS. Lynn ignores it as long as she can before breaking away to go answer it.

LYNN

Hello?

OLDER GENTLEMAN

(Alan Ladd)

Is it the cops?

She waves him off. As he practices pointing his finger like Ladd points a gun, Lynn reacts to the news on the phone.

EXT. 9781 SOUTH DUQUESNE - DAY

A South Central plywood and tar-paper dive. A BLACK BOXER pounds a heavy bag/speed bag combo bolted to the porch.

Wiry, a welterweight, he doesn't see Jack and Exley till they're almost on top of him.

JACK
Leonard Bidwell?

The Boxer leans on the bag to catch his breath. Looking them over, he finally nods.

JACK (CONT'D)
How's the left these days?

BOXER
What's it to you?

JACK
I saw you fight Kid Gavilan. I like your style.

BOXER
What do you want, Mr. Policeman?

JACK
You got a brother up in Folsom. I know because I put him there.

BOXER
Till 19-fucking-70.

JACK
How'd you like to make it 1960? I know the judge and Sergeant Exley here is friends with hte D.A.

Exley nods, this is true. The Boxer's still listening.

JACK (CONT'D)
We're looking for three colored guys who like to pop off shotguns. One of 'em owns a purple Merc coupe.

BOXER
You wanna get me a fuckin' snitch jacket?

JACK
You wanna buy your brother ten years...? You don't have to say anything. Just look at this list and point. Here.

Jack holds the DMV list out to the Boxer, who waves it off.

BOXER

He's bad, so I'll just tell you.
Sugar Ray Coates. Drives a '49
coupe, a beautiful ride. Don't
know about shotguns, but he gets
his thrills killing dogs. He is
righteous trash.

Jack and Exley scan the list. Jack's finger stabs down on,
"Coates, Raymond, 9611 South Central, Room 414."

JACK

That's five minutes from here.

EXT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - DAY

Lynn does her best to usher the slightly disheveled Older
Gentleman out the door.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

I don't understand, doll, we just
got started.

LYNN

I'm sorry, but I'll make it up to
you. I promise.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

Gosh, kitten, I don't know...

As he begins to mash up against her...

BUD (O.S.)

Hit the road, gramps.

Bud's standing at the bottom of the stairs. The Older
Gentleman strikes a pose. He still thinks he's Alan Ladd.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

Alright. This time I'll go, but
next time --

BUD

(flips badge)
L.A.P.D., shitbird. Get the fuck
out of here or I'll call your wife
to come get you.

Sputtering, the Older Gentleman exchanges a look with Lynn
then hurries away, giving Bud a wide berth.

LYNN

I've been expecting you. Pierce called. Told me what happened to Sue.

INT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - DAY

A nice breezy feel. The perfect place to shack up.

LYNN

It's Officer White, isn't it?

Bud nods, eyeballs the place.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Can I get you a drink?

BUD

Yeah, plain scotch.

Bud watches her move to the bar. God, she's beautiful.

LYNN

I was friendly with Sue Lefferts, but we weren't really friends. You know what I mean?

BUD

Are you sorry she's dead?

LYNN

Of course I am. What kind of question is that?

She steps back with a scotch for both of them.

BUD

Have you ever heard of Dick Stensland?

LYNN

No I haven't. Do you know why Pierce is humoring you?

BUD

You use words like that, you might make me mad.

LYNN

Yes. But do you know?

BUD

Yeah I know. Patchett's running whores and judging by his address, probably something bigger on the side. He doesn't want any attention.

LYNN

That's right. Our motives are selfish, so we're cooperating.

BUD

Why was Susan Lefferts at the Nite Owl?

LYNN

I don't know. I never heard of the Nite Owl till today.

BUD

Did Lefferts have a boyfriend?

LYNN

Like I said we were friendly, not friends.

BUD

How'd she meet Patchett?

LYNN

Pierce meets people. Sue came on the bus with dreams of Hollywood. This is how they turned out. Thanks to Pierce, we still get to act a little.

BUD

Tell me about Patchett.

LYNN

He's waiting for you to mention mention.

BUD

You want some advice, Miss Bracken?

LYNN

It's Lynn.

BUD

Miss Bracken, don't ever try to fucking bribe me or threaten me or I'll have you and Patchett in shit up to your ears.

Lynn smiles again. She likes Bud. A beat.

LYNN

I remember you from Christmas Eve.
You have a thing for helping women,
don't you, Officer White?

BUD

Maybe I'm just fucking curious.

LYNN

You say 'fuck' a lot.

BUD

You fuck for money.

LYNN

There's blood on your shirt. Is
that an integral part of your job?

BUD

Yeah.

LYNN

Do you enjoy it?

BUD

When they deserve it.

LYNN

Did they deserve it today?

BUD

I'm not sure.

LYNN

But you did it anyway.

BUD

Yeah, just like the half dozen guys
you screwed today.

LYNN

(laughs again)
Actually, it was two. You're
different, Officer White. You're
the first man in five years who
didn't tell me I look like Veronica
Lake inside of a minute.

BUD

You look better than Veronica Lake.
Now, Pierce Patchett.

LYNN

He takes a cut of our earnings and invests it for us. He makes us quit the life at thirty. He doesn't let us use narcotics and he doesn't abuse us. Can your policeman's mentality grasp those contradictions?

BUD

He had you cut to look like Veronica Lake?

LYNN

No. I'm really a brunette, but the rest is me. And that's all the news that's fit to print.

Lynn starts toward the door. Bud watches her a moment, then follows. She takes his glass at the door.

LYNN (CONT'D)

It was nice meeting you, Officer.

Out the door, Bud turns back. Blurts:

BUD

Look. I want to see you again.

LYNN

Are you asking me for a date or an appointment?

BUD

(suddenly unsure)
I don't know.

LYNN

(another smile)
If it's a date I think you'd better tell me your first name because I --

BUD

(feeling foolish)
Forget I asked. It was a mistake.

Lynn watches thoughtfully after Bud as he walks away. He opens his car door like he's going to tear it off. A last glance back at Lynn and as he gets in the car...

EXT. TEVERE HOTEL - DAY

An L-shaped walk-up. Jack coasts the car to the curb. He leaps out with Exley. Exley holds up at the sight of a late model sedan. He leans down to look in the window at the two-way on the dash.

EXLEY

L.A.P.D.

JACK

Shit. Someone beat us here.

VOICES from the carport ahead. We see a chrome bumper, the purple fender of a '49 Mercury coupe. A door slams. Drawing a .45, Jack starts over with Exley, .38 in hand.

CARPORT

Toting shotguns, Dudley's boys from the Victory Motel, Breuning and Carlisle, stand by the purple Mercury. Jack and Exley come around the corner, lower their guns.

JACK

Hey.

Breuning wheels, pumps a round into the chamber. He very nearly fires before he sees who it is.

CARLISLE

What the fuck are you guys doing here?

EXLEY

Think of us as back-up.

JACK

What do you got?

As Jack moves to peer through the Merc's window.

BREUNING

Three Ithaca pumps, an empty box of double-ought buck and cash.

Jack spots them. Three shotguns on the passenger side floor, an empty box of shells and loose dollar bills.

JACK

So long, Vice. Badge of Honor, here I come.

CARLISLE
 Fuck you, Vincennes. It's our
 collar.

Breuning actually has to restrain his partner.

EXLEY
 Quiet. I'm ranking officer here.
 We go as a team. End of story.

INT. CORRIDOR - TEVERE HOTEL - DAY

Breuning and Carlisle lead the way with Jack and Exley
 bringing up the rear. Squinting, Exley reaches to his pocket
 for something. Not there.

EXLEY
 Damn it...

JACK
 What?

EXLEY
 Glasses.

JACK
 (chuckling)
 Just don't shoot me.

The door to 414. Two men on either side. Breuning rears
 back. Jack rears back. They kick at the same instant. The
 door flies off its hinges to reveal two young black men,
 LARRY FONTAINE and TY JONES, waking from a couple of flop
 mattresses.

ROOM 414
 Fontaine jumps up. Entering,
 Carlisle aims, but Exley grabs his
 arm. The BLAST rips the ceiling.
 Jack aims.

JACK
 Freeze!

Fontaine freezes. Jones doesn't dare get up.

CARLISLE
 Ace him, Jack.

EXLEY
 Shut up, Carlisle!

Jack and Exley burst into a...

SECOND BEDROOM

Another black, RAY COATES, passed out on mattress, surrounded by empty beer cans. Jack sticks his .38 in his back, starts to cuff him. As the cuff ratchets down...

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - DAY

Dudley watches intently as Ed Exley skims a report, memorizing names and dates. Jack and other brass are also here along with a stenographer. So's Bud. One of these guys killed Stensland. Through tinted glass, the three suspects in three different rooms.

EXLEY

Casitas Youth Camp... Coates twenty-two, a boxer... Manager saw them burning clothes.

Satisfied, Exley sets the report down.

DUDLEY

Ed, I want confessions.

EXLEY

I'll break them, sir.

As Exley steps into the #1 room, Jack joins Dudley.

JACK

You think golden boy can handle it, Cap?

DUDLEY

I think you'll be surprised what Edmund's capable of.

INT. #1 ROOM - DAY

Exley closes the door. Ray Coates is cuffed to a chair, dressed in baggy County denims. One eye swollen shut, lip split, a smashed nose with one nostril split.

Exley unlocks his cuffs. drops cigarettes and amatches on the table. As Coates rubs his wrists...

EXLEY

They call you Sugar Ray because of Ray Robinson?

(no answer)

(MORE)

EXLEY (CONT'D)

They say Robinson can throw a four
punch combination in one second.
Do you believe that?

Coates just stares at him.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

You're twenty-two, aren't you, Ray?

COATES

Say what and so what.

EXLEY

Did one of the officers work you
over a little?

No bite. Coates just stares back.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

You look like Robinson after that
last LaMotta fight. 'Course
LaMotta looked a lot worse. So
you're twenty-two, right?

COATES

Man, why do you keep asking me
that?

EXLEY

Just getting my facts straight.
Twenty-two makes it a gas chamber
bounce.

You should have pulled this caper a couple of years ago. Get
life, do a little Youth Authority jolt, transfer to Folsom a
big man. Orbit on some of that good prison brew, get yourself
a sissy --

COATES

I never truck with no sissies!

EXLEY

That fucking Larry. I almost
believed him.

COATES

Believed what?

EXLEY

Nothing, Ray.

(laughs)

That Larry, he's a pisser. You did
the Casitas Youth Camp with him,
didn't you?

COATES

Man, why're you talkin' about
Larry? His business is his
business.

Unseen by Coates, Exley reaches under the table, takes hold
of one of three toggle switches.

EXLEY

Sugar, Larry told me you went sissy
up at Casitas. You couldn't do the
time so you found yourself a big
white boy to look after you. He
said they call you 'Sugar' because
you gave it out so sweet.

Exley flips the toggle.

#3 ROOM

The speaker over Larry Fontaine's
head crackles to life.

COATES (V.O.)

Larry gave it at Casitas! Man, I
was the fuckin' boss jockey on my
dorm! Larry's the sissy! Larry
gave it for candy bars!

#1 ROOM

Exley flips up the second toggle.

EXLEY

Ray, you protected Ty and Larry up
in Casitas, didn't you?

COATES

You ain't woofin' I did. Stupid
down home niggers got no more sense
than a fuckin' dog.

Exley flips the switches off.

EXLEY

I heard you like to shoot dogs.

COATES

Dogs got no reason to live.

EXLEY

Oh? you feel that way about
people, too?

COATES

Man, what're you saying?

EXLEY

Ray, we got the shotguns.

COATES

I don't own no shotguns.

EXLEY

Why were you throwing clothes in the building incinerator?

COATES

(trembling)

Say what?

EXLEY

You guys were arrested this morning, but none of you have last night's clothes. You were seen burning them. Add to that the fact that you hid the car you were cruising around in last night and it doesn't look good.

COATES

I got nothin' more to say till I see a judge.

EXLEY

Were you on hop? You were passed out when you got arrested. Were you hopped up, Ray?

COATES

Ty and Larry fuck with that shit, not me.

EXLEY

Where do they get their stuff? Come on. Give me one to feed the D.A. Just a little one.

Coates nods. Exley flips up the toggles as he leans in.

COATES

Roland Navarette. Lives on Bunker Hill. He runs a hole-up for parole absconders and sells red devils.

Exley flips down the switches, stands.

EXLEY

I'm going to take a break.

Exley opens the door, looks back in afterthought.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

You know, Ray, I'm talking about the gas chamber and you haven't even asked me what this is all about. You got a big guilty sign around your neck.

Exley exits.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Exley enters.

DUDLEY

Masterful, Edmund. Your father would've been proud.

(pointing)

This one's on the verge.

Exley looks through the glass into #2. Larry Fontaine is weeping. A piss puddle on the floor by his chair.

EXLEY

Fontaine next, but give Jones the newspaper. I want him primed.

#2 ROOM

Fontaine tries to control his sniffles as Exley enters.

EXLEY

Larry, Ray Coates ratted you off. He said the Nite Owl was your idea. You want to tell me about it?

No answer.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

I think it was Ray's idea. Talk and I think I can save your life.

No answer.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

Larry, this is a gas chamber job. If you don't talk, you'll be dead in six months.

No answer.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

Son, six people are dead and somebody has to pay. It can be you or it can be Ray.

No answer.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

Larry, he called you queer. He said at Casitas you took it up the ass. He said --

FONTAINE

I DIDN'T KILL NOBODY!

The voice is strong, full of conviction. Exley glances at the mirror. Then...

EXLEY

Why'd you burn the clothes?

FONTAINE

(sobbing)

I just wanted to lose my cherry. I didn't mean to hurt her.

Exley can't hide his surprise at this.

EXLEY

Hurt who? Was she a hooker? Hurt who?

But Fontaine is gone. Head lolling, eyes squeezing out tears.

OBSERVATION ROOM

Exley steps out of the interrogation room. Dudley braces him.

DUDLEY

Don't get sidetracked. Stay with the Nite Owl.

EXLEY

She may still be alive, whoever she is.

Bud's all ears.

#3 ROOM

Reading, Jones has his feet on the table. Exley bursts in.

JONES

This newspaper shit ain't shit.

EXLEY

Where's the girl? Did you kill her?

No answer, but Jones looks nervous.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

You wanted Larry to lose his cherry, but things got out of hand. Is that right?

OBSERVATION ROOM

Everyone's attention is riveted, particularly Bud's. They watch, listen over the speaker.

EXLEY

(over speaker)

Kick loose, Jones. I know you made her bleed, but that doesn't mean you killed her.

No answer, but Jones is squirming.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

(over speaker)

If that girl's alive, you've still got a chance on this one.

JONES

(over speaker)

I think she's alive.

EXLEY

(over speaker)

You think?

Jack turns to Dudley.

JACK

He's good. I'll give him that.

They don't notice as the chair back begins to splinter in Bud's hands.

#3 ROOM

Exley sits across from him, tries to wrap it up.

EXLEY

Where is she now?

(no answer)

Did you leave her someplace?

(no answer)

(MORE)

EXLEY (CONT'D)

Did you sell her out? Give her to
some of your buddies? Tell me
where the girl is!

The door blasts open. Bud slams Jones up against the wall.
As Exley stands, he bangs his knee on the table. Pulling a
.38, Bud breaks the cylinder, drops 5 shells on the floor.

BUD

One in six. Where's the girl?

EXLEY

Officer White, put down that weapon
and --

Bud shoves the barrel into Jones' mouth, pulls the trigger
twice. CLICK, CLICK. Jones starts to slide down the wall.
Bud jerks him back up, roars.

BUD

WHERE?!

Two more clicks. Jones spills.

JONES

S-sylvester F-fitch one-o-nine and
Avalon gray corner house...

EXT. AVALON BOULEVARD - EVENING

A four cordon. They coast up to a GRAY CORNER HOUSE. Dudley
Smith behind the wheel of the lead cruiser. Bud White rides
shotgun, reloading his revolver.

BUD

Give me one minute.

DUDLEY

You've got it, Wendell.

STREET

Bud is out the door and scooting
down an alley. Exley moves to
follow, but Dudley cuts him off.

DUDLEY

We're going through the front.

ALLEY

Bud vaults a fence, pads up the
back porch. A screen door. Bud
slips the catch with a penknife and
walks inside.

SCREEN PORCH

Bud heads for a blind-covered door.
Unlocked, he enters...

A HALLWAY

Light bouncing from side rooms. We hear the opening spiel of "Badge of Honor" from the left. Bud wheels into a...

BEDROOM

A NUDE GIRL spread-eagled on a mattress. Bound with neckties. One in her mouth. Her eyes grow wide at the sight of Bud, then flicker to the adjoining room. Directing him. Raising the .38, Bud enters...

THE KITCHEN

Sylvester Fitch sits naked at the table wolfing Rice Krispies and watching "Badge of Honor" on a flickering TV. He looks up, sees the .38 before he sees Bud beyond it. Fitch drops his spoon, raises his hands.

Bud SHOTS him in the face. Dead, Fitch just sits there.

Bud moves behind him. Pulling a spare piece from an ankle holster, Bud FIRES back at the door from Fitch's line of fire, then puts the gun in Fitch's hand.

We hear the FRONT DOOR CRASH OPEN. As Fitch slides off the chair to the floor, Bud dumps the Rice Krispies on him.

EXT. GRAY HOUSE - NIGHT

The Girl on a stretcher. Being carried to an AMBULANCE. Bud White walks alongside, looking like some ferocious pet pit bull. The ATTENDANTS get her inside. One joins her. The other closes the door, pauses to light a smoke.

Bud rips the cigarette out of his mouth, nearly taking the guy's lips with it.

BUD

Get her to the fucking hospital.

One look at Bud, and the Attendant is running around to the driver's side. Exley arrives, steamed.

EXLEY

A naked guy with a gun? You expect anyone to believe that?

BUD

Get the fuck away from me.

Bud starts away, but Exley gets right in his face. Other cops begin to take notice. The ambulance pulls out.

EXLEY

How's it going to look on your report?

BUD

It'll look like justice. That's what that fat fuck got. Justice.

EXLEY

You don't know what the word means, you dumb bastard.

Bud goes after Exley, but ten hands pull them apart. Dudley on Exley. Four cops genuinely having trouble on Bud.

And as if things couldn't get crazier, shouts from the cops on the street. POLICE RADIOS CRANKED UP.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)

Repeat, three suspects escaped from the Hall of Justice jail. The Nite Owl killers: Raymond Coates, Tyrone Jones and Larry Fontaine. They are considered armed and extremely dangerous. Descriptions are as follows...

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Electrified, "Nite Owl Killers" on everyone's lips. Exley strides through with purpose, beelines to a filing cabinet. Exley pulls the file he's looking for. He scans an interrogation transcript, reads to himself the words he's looking for:

EXLEY

'Give me one to feed the D.A.... Roland Navarette. Lives on Bunker Hill. Runs a hole-up for parole absconders.'

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - JACK'S DESK - DAY

Police rush back and forth. Exley hurries over to the desk, but he's not there.

EXLEY

Anyone seen Jack Vincennes?

A few cops mumble they haven't. As Exley decides what to do, Carlisle from the original arrest steps over.

CARLISLE

Is something up, Lieutenant?

EXT. 1ST & OLIVE - DAY

Exley and Carlisle pull up across the street from a four-story Victorian with paint peeling off the clap-boards. They jump out of the car toting SHOTGUNS. Carlisle waits as Exley checks the mail slots: "R. Navarette, 408. "

INT. STAIRWELL - VICTORIAN BUILDING - DAY

Exley and Carlisle take the steps two at a time.

INT. 4TH FLOOR HALLWAY - VICTORIAN BUILDING - DAY

Exley squints, reaches to a pocket. No glasses. He passes an elevator, rounds a corner. There's 408. Exley pumps the shotgun, nods to Carlisle who kicks the door in.

NAVARETTE LIVING ROOM

Exley and Carlisle burst in on four men eating sandwiches. Fontaine and Caucasian NAVARETTE at a table. Coates on the floor. Jones by the window. Exley squints.

EXLEY

Nobody move!

Fontaine and Navarette raise their hands. A jostled BEER BOTTLE CRASHES to the floor. Reacting, Carlisle JERKS the TRIGGER. Fontaine goes down.

Navarette draws a .38, SHOTS Carlisle twice in the chest. Exley BLASTS Navarette.

Screaming, Jones pulls a .45 from his belt. Exley FIRES, blowing him right THROUGH the WINDOW.

Coates draws and FIRES, makes a run for it. A bad pull takes out half a back wall. Coates is out the door.

ELEVATOR

Coates makes it inside, frantically pushes buttons.

HALLWAY

Here comes Exley. Stumbling, wiping Navarette's blood out of his eyes, he closes on the...

ELEVATOR

Coates watches as the elevator doors begin closing.

HALLWAY

Exley charging.

ELEVATOR

The shotgun barrel juts through. The doors bang against it. BLAM!

DISSOLVE TO:

L.A. MONTAGE

TONY BENNETT belts "BOULEVARD OF BROKEN DREAMS."

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - DAY

Exley returns to grudging respect. His white shirt flecked with blood, he's clapped on the back by Dudley who dubs him "Shotgun Ed." Exley doesn't enjoy it. He's numb, stumbling along. As he notices the blood on his hands...

INSERT - NEWSPAPER HEADLINE

NITE OWL HERO! Over a photo of Exley.

EXT. CEMETERY - GRAVE - DAY

A coffin is lowered into the ground. A WIDOW leans on the Chief's arm, accepts a tri-folded American flag from Dudley Smith. Exley drops a handful of earth on the casket, has trouble getting the wet dirt off his hands.

CHIEF

We mourn the passing of a good man.
The loss of Sgt.

(MORE)

CHIEF (CONT'D)

William Carlisle is the loss of his wife, his family and the entire Los Angeles Police Department...

A sea of dress blues. Jack looks bored, dressed too flashy for a funeral. Bud looks grim, rain dripping off the brim of his cap. As a TWENTY-ONE GUN salute is

FIRED...

EXT. CEMETERY (SOUTH CENTRAL, L.A.) - DAY

Larry Fontaine's mother mourns alone as her son is buried.

INT. CITY OF ANGELS HOSPITAL - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Exley talks with a tough, starchy NURSE.

EXLEY

I need the girl to give me a chronology of events. No details. Just times.

NURSE

Absolutely not. She barely remembers her own name.

EXLEY

But --

NURSE

I was told the case was closed. Should I call your superior to double-check?

EXLEY

No. that won't be necessary.

The Nurse turns, marches away. Exley is left with a nagging doubt.

EXT. ORANGE GROVE (ANAHEIM) - DAY

People cheer as bulldozers mow down orange trees. A banner heralds the future: "On this site: The World's Biggest Amusement Park." Cartoon characters dance among the fallen trees.

INT. STATE ASSEMBLYMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Sitting behind a desk is the Older Gentleman last seen doing his best Alan Ladd impersonation at Lynn Bracken's.

He stares emphatically at the SMARMY LAWYER who stands before him holding a manila folder.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

You tell Mr. Patchett I have no intention of changing my vote.

The Lawyer simply hands him a stack of photographs. From Lynn Bracken's apartment. The first is the Older Gentleman naked except for his socks and garters.

INT. STATE ASSEMBLY - CHAMBER - DAY

The Older Gentleman rises for an assembly vote.

OLDER GENTLEMAN

It may surprise some, but a mature man, enlightened by the facts, can change him mind...

EXT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - NIGHT

Rain. A limo disgorges a heavy-set man who climbs steps, knocks on the door. Lynn answers in an evening gown. He gives her a peck on the cheek and continues in past her. Lynn's about to follow him in when she pauses to deadpan a look down the street.

Bud's Packard is parked there and we can see his darkened silhouette behind the wheel. Smiling a bit sadly to herself, Lynn disappears inside.

This is no stake-out. Bud watches after her with yearning.

INT. TROCADERO CLUB - NIGHT

Cigarette girls and club photographer make the rounds. Johnny Stompanato enjoys the frenzied floor show.

EXT. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - DAY

A horse parade, heavy on the law enforcement contingent, Out of place in his suit and tie, District Attorney Ellis Loew awkwardly rides atop a sleek Palimono.

INT. OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

The crowd in a frenzy as Vincennes-snitch, the welterweight black boxer, beats the shit out of a white fighter.

INT. MIDDLE CLASS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A father holds out his hand, counts along as Jack slaps \$100 bills into his palm. Maybe four thousand dollars.

Jack says something about "We appreciate your understanding during this difficult time." As "Badge of Honor" comes on the TV, the father responds with "Goddamn actors."

Leading, Jack looks through an open door where Brett Chase's high school "Sweater Girl" is being comforted by her mother. As she locks eyes with him an instant...

INT. PIERCE PATCHETT'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The monied johns watch horny as hell as "Ginger Rogers" twirls around the room with a female "Fred Astaire." Clothes fly as they spin. Still, most eyes turn to Lynn Bracken as she enters oozing that cat-girl grace.

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Reporters scribble as the Chief speaks. Uniforms everywhere along with Exley and Loew. Bus sits in the back.

CHIEF

Edmund J. Exley has amassed a brilliant record in his seven years with the L.A.P.D. Recently he evinced spectacular bravery in the line of duty. It is my honor to present him with our highest honor, the Medal of Valor.

Exley steps up. The Chief hangs a gold medallion around his neck. Flashbulbs pop as the two men shake hands.

Exley then accepts a handshake from Dudley. The policemen stand on cue, applaud without enthusiasm. Dudley lifts the medal from his chest.

DUDLEY

Your father would've been proud.

Exley uses the noise to have aprivate chat with Dudley.

EXLEY

There are loose ends out there,
Dudley. I --

DUDLEY

There always are. But there are
also three men and three guns.
Matched forensically. A few loose
ends don't matter.

EXLEY

Something's wrong. I feel it
inside. Doesn't that sound crazy?

Dudley puts an arm around Exley's shoulder, smiles out as
more bulbs flash.

DUDLEY

Breaking a big case sticks you in a
whirlwind. A little self-doubt?
It's natural. Just keep it inside.
Between you and you.

Exley considers his medal. It is an appealing thing.

In the back, Bud stays sprawled in his seat. No one's
watching as he takes out his gun, kisses it, and blows
pretend smoke off the barrel. As the song ends...

INT. VARIETY INTERNATIONAL PICTURES - STAGE 4 - NIGHT

A "Badge of Honor" fund-raiser for D.A. Loew's re- election
campaign. Hot dogs and sauerkraut. Fishbowls stuffed with
cash. Jack is here, returns a smile half- heartedly. Loew
sits with his wife and teenage daughter as Brett "Joe Reno"
Chase speaks.

CHASE

This election is about the future
of law enforcement in Los Angeles.
Ellis Loew represents that future.
So dig deep and let's get a moral
man re-elected.

Applause. Leaving the podium, Chase smiles at Ellis Loew's
daughter who absolutely gushes. Chase then winks knowingly
to Jack who returns a tired, humorless smile.

Jack scans the room. An odd moment as Jack catches his own
reflection in a mirror across the way. He puts a hand to his
face. Is that him?

HUDGEON (O.S.)
Big V Jack Vincennes!

Jack turns to see Sid Hudgeons approaching.

HUDGEONS
You're back, boychick.

JACK
Sid, how are they hanging?

HUDGEONS
Down around my ankles.

Hudgeons scans the crowd, points someone out.

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)
You remember Matt Reynolds?

Jack spots Matt Reynolds -- one of the young actors Jack arrested on Christmas Eve.

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)
The Grauman's Chinese pot bust. He just got off the honor farm.

JACK
What's he doing here, Sid?

HUDGEONS
You tight with the D.A., trash?

JACK
Sure, he just tried to throw me off the force last Christmas as a little joke.

HUDGEONS
How'd you like a little payback? Not to mention a donation to the widows and orphans fund. Did you know Loew was a swish?

JACK
And Reynolds?

HUDGEONS
He's queer too. Metro paid him two grand a week to fake it with ingenues. On screen and off. I'm getting him to fuck the D.A. for a hundred bucks.

(winks)
(MORE)

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

That's twice the fifty you got for wrecking his career.

Even Jack's not immune to a comment like that.

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

Matt! Over here!

As Hudgeons heads over, Hudgeons points out...

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

That's D.A. Loew right there.

Reynolds gets a nervous bead on Loew. Hudgeons realizes:

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

You need a drink, kid... Jack, look after him a minute. Kid, this is Jack. No secrets between me and him.

Hudgeons heads off. Reynolds, plae, nods at Jack.

REYNOLDS

Have we met before?

JACK

Yeah.

Jack doesn't really feel like talking to him. Reynolds' nerves won't let him stay quiet.

REYNOLDS

Was it a party?

JACK

Something like that.

REYNOLDS

(misreading)

Oh, I know. A Fleur-de-Lis party, right?

Jack remembers the name, plays along for what it's worth.

JACK

Fleur-de-Lis. 'Whatever you desire.'

REYNOLDS

Dope, liquor, hookers that look like movie stars. Pierce Patchett has it all.

Jack recognizes the name, bluffs for more information.

JACK

Yeah. Me and Patchett go way back.

REYNOLDS

Pierce isn't like regular people. I dig him, but he scares me too.

JACK

Really? How?

REYNOLDS

(shakes his head)

You know, when I came out to L.A., this isn't exactly where I saw myself ending up.

JACK

Yeah. Me neither.

Reynolds looks like he's going to cry. Hudgeons returns with a double Scotch straight up and a hot dog with sauerkraut. He hands the drink to Matt.

HUDGEONS

Dutch courage, kid. Drink up.

Reynolds downs a few gulps, looks across the room at Loew.

REYNOLDS

I don't know if I should do this.

HUDGEONS

Hey, it's not like you don't know how. And Jack here has connections on 'Badge of Honor.' Pull this off and there'll be a part for you. I smell a comeback. Don't you, Jack?

Reynolds looks to Jack who gives a noncommittal shrug.

JACK

Loew's free. Congratulate him.

Reynolds nods, drains his glass and heads off. Hudgeons hands Jack a folded slip of paper.

HUDGEONS

If Reynolds works his charms, which he will, this is the address where they'll be. Meet me at midnight. I guarantee all sorts of illegal activity.

Hudgeons takes out a President Grant \$50 bill. Jack doesn't take it.

JACK

Sid, why would a guy like Pierce Patchett get involved with running dope and hookers?

HUDGEONS

Where'd you hear that?

JACK

Around.

HUDGEONS

Jackie, all I know is what you know. The man is very rich. And he's invested in freeway construction so he's gonna get a lot richer. But that's it. Patchett's what I like to call 'Twilight.' He ain't queer, he ain't Red, he can't help me in my quest for prime sinuendo.

Jack takes the \$50 as Reynolds returns, shaking his head.

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

What?

REYNOLDS

I can't do it.

HUDGEONS

Talk to him, Jack. Tell him about the opening on the show.

JACK

I'm pretty sure I can get you a part on the show... But tonight? Pretend it's an acting job, kid. Showbiz.

REYNOLDS

And no one'll know about this?

JACK

It'll be our secret.

REYNOLDS

Showbiz.

Emboldened by Jack's promise, Reynolds heads off. Jack and Hudgeons watch as he strikes a conversation with Loew who's captivated. Hudgeons chomps a bite of his hot dog, gives Jack the high sign, but Jack just feels like a pimp.

INT. VICTORY HOTEL - ROOM SIX - NIGHT

Screams. A cauliflower-eared Cleveland mob enforcer on the hotseat.

Breuning works him with a rubber hose as Dudley asks unanswered questions. Bud watches, revulsion growing.

DUDLEY

Where did you intend to start.
Prostitution? Gambling?

(no answer)

Go back to Cleveland, lad. This is
the City of Angels and you haven't
got any wings.

More screams as the hose thwops down. Bud looks away, then shuffles blindly out of the room.

INT. VICTORY HOTEL - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Bud runs water in the sink to drown out the SCREAMS. It doesn't work. Finally, he leans down and sticks his head under the stream of water. That doesn't work either.

EXT. VICTORY HOTEL - NIGHT

Hair dripping wet, Bud makes it to his car. The tires spit gravel as he tears away. Dudley appears in the doorway, watching curiously. As cauliflower continues to

SCREAM...

INT. BUD'S PACKARD - 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN'S) - NIGHT

Bud watches Lynn Bracken's apartment, Colored lights play on the windows. Shadows pass. Finally the front door opens. There's Veronica Lake, all sparkles and spangles, kissing another distinguished gentleman goodnight. Bud watches the man into a waiting limo. As it pulls away...

INT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - LIVING ROOM -

NIGHT

Now Lynn just looks tired. As she puts away Scotch bottles and picks up empty glasses, there's a KNOCK on the door. Lynn sighs, become sultry Veronica Lake before our eyes.

INT. FRONT HALL - NIGHT

LYNN

(opening door)

Did you forget some --

Bud stands there, filling up the door frame.

LYNN (CONT'D)

I wondered when you might ring the bell again, Officer White.

BUD

It's Bud.

Bud looks at Lynn a moment, then down at his own feet. Embarrassed. She smiles.

LYNN

You should see yourself. You look like you're ten years old.

Bud looks back up. Lynn's smile fades as she studies his face. She's not going to ask questions. Lynn looks at him a moment more, then runs a hand through the blonde hair covering one eye.

LYNN (CONT'D)

If you'd called first, I wouldn't look this ridiculous.

INT. LYNN BRACKEN'S (1736 NOTTINGHAM) - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lynn comes to Bud naked, her hair brushed back. Bud goes slow, gently, takes time with his kisses: like she was a lonely woman he wanted to love to death.

Lynn plays off his timing: her kisses back, her touches. Finally, Bud forces himself to stop. He pulls back so he can see her.

LYNN

You're wondering if Patchett told me to be receptive.

Bud doesn't answer, but yes.

LYNN (CONT'D)

It doesn't matter. I like you, Bud. I really do.

She kisses him. Softly, drawing it out. Not a job. She wants to make love to him. And as Bud stops thinking...

EXT. 5261 CHERAMOYA AVENUE (HOLLYWOOD) - NIGHT

Jack sits in his car waiting. He checks his watch... Well past midnight.

JACK

Come on, Sid. Where are you?

Jack decides. MOVE WITH him as he gets out and crosses the street. The apartment is dark, the front door a few inches ajar. Suspicious, Jack listens. Dead quiet. He enters...

INT. 5261 CHERAMOYA AVENUE - NIGHT

No one here it seems. Till Jack nearly trips over a body. Matt Reynolds. Soaked in blood. Throat slit. Jack looks down in horror as Reynolds seems to stare back up at him. Jack stumbles out the door. We hear his CAR DOOR SLAM shut, the SCREECH of RUBBER down the street.

EXT. 2345 HALBORO (HUDGEONS' HOUSE) - NIGHT

Jack pounds on Sid's door till lights switch on.

JACK

It's Vincennes! Open up!

Hudgeons opens the door. He's in his pajamas.

HUDGEONS

Jackie! You got some good scoop for the Sidster?

JACK

Sid, cut the crap. I --

HUDGEONS

Give me some Narco skinny. I want to put out an all hop-head issue. Shvartze jazz musicians and movie stars. Maybe tie it into the Rosenbergs. You like?

Jack grabs him, jerks him into the door frame.

JACK

Shut up!

HUDGEONS

(confused)

What's wrong, Trash?

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

What happened with the kid and Loew?

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

You didn't get my message? It got called off. The kid chickened out at the last minute.

JACK

He's dead. I was just there. Somebody slit his throat.

HUDGEONS

Jesus. Jack, that's a story. 'Swish Actor Gets The Gay Blade.' Let me get my camera.

Hudgeons starts away, but Jack grabs him.

JACK

Loew didn't go with him. You're sure?

HUDGEONS

I put Reynolds in the cab myself. The night cost me a hundred scoots and I got bupkis.

Jack lets go of him, starts to ramble off into the night.

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

Jackie! Big V! Let me get my camera! Where are you going?!

INT. AFTER HOURS CLUB - NIGHT

The BARTENDER walks down the bar to where Jack arrives.

BARTENDER
What'll it be, Jack?

JACK
(pulls out wallet)
A bottle of Scotch.

As the Bartender turns for one, the only bill Jack finds is the President Grant fifty. The things he's done for fifty bucks... As he looks up with despair at his reflection in the bar mirror, the Bartender sets down a bottle and shot glass. He plucks the fifty from Jack's hand.

Jack grabs the bottle and starts out.

BARTENDER
Hey! Your change!

INT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Spent, Bud and Lynn lie in bed. She traces a finger over his bicep as he muses on the ceiling.

BUD
Who was that guy who was here
earlier?

Lynn's tracing finger stops on Bud's shoulder -- a small white scar.

LYNN
It doesn't matter. All they get is
Veronica Lake. You got the real
Lynn Margaret Bracken...
(re: scar)
Where'd this come from?

BUD
When I was ten, my old man threw a
bottle at my mother. I guess I got
in the way.

LYNN
So you saved her.

BUD
Yeah. But not for long.

Bud looks away. Lynn sees he doesn't want to talk about it.

LYNN

Do you like being a cop, Bud?

BUD

I used to. What I do now is strong-arm. Sitting duck stuff... No, I don't like it. If I could work Homicide like a real detective...

Lynn listens sympathetically. Bud's opening up.

BUD (CONT'D)

There's something wrong with the Nite Owl. That prick Exley shot the wrong guys. But they made him a hero and whoever killed my partner is still out there.

Frustrated, Bud pokes at his own chest.

BUD (CONT'D)

In here I know it. But I can't prove it. I'm not a detective. I'm not smart enough. I'm just the guy they bring in to scare the other guy shitless.

Bud looks away, embarrassed to have shown so much of himself. Lynn reaches over, turns his face back to her.

LYNN

You found Patchett. You found me. You're smart enough. Be a detective if that's what you want.

BUD

That simple, huh?

Lynn nods. That simple.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - EXLEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Exley looks up as a CLERK enters holding two files.

CLERK

I got the rap sheets on the black guys, sir. Coates and Jones got charges a mile long. But except for some kid stuff, Fontaine's clean.

EXLEY

Clean?

CLERK

More or less.

EXLEY

Until he gunned down six people.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - DAY

Exley stands in the trees as a PARK RANGER approaches.

PARK RANGER

I asked my men, Lieutenant. No one remembers any colored guys firing shotguns.

EXLEY

Then who phoned in the report?

PARK RANGER

Not us.

INT. FORENSICS LAB - DAY

Ray Pinker looks up from his microscope as Bud enters.

PINKER

Bud White, what brings you down to the basement?

BUD

I got a few Nite Owl questions.

PINKER

I don't know if you read the papers, but that case is closed.

BUD

I'm tying up loose ends. Padding my report. You know how it goes.

PINKER

What do you want to know?

BUD

Anything off. Anything that didn't make sense.

PINKER

You mean beside the fact that thirty-five out of forty-five rounds were gratuitous? I can't think of anything.

Pinker is ticked as Bud steps over to where a group of Nite Owl crime scene photos are posted on the wall. Bud pauses at a photo which shows the floor around the table. We see a high heel shoe, blood smears across the floor.

BUD
Whose shoe?

PINKER
Susan Lefferts.

BUD
(pointing)
If she was sitting here, then it's facing the wrong way. What are these smears in the blood?

PINKER
It looks like she was flailing, trying to get away.

BUD
But she's moving away from the door.
(thinks; points)
Who was sitting at this table?

PINKER
Dick Stensland.
(a beat)
Had to be dumb panic. If she knew him she would've been sitting with him... Right?

Bud wonders, maybe a puzzle piece just fell into place. Pinker remembers something.

PINKER (CONT'D)
You know, there is one thing.

Pinker rummages a shelf for a glass jar which he hands Bud. Inside are two wax-saturated cotton balls.

PINKER (CONT'D)
Cotton balls. I found them just inside the meat locker door.

BUD
Ear plugs.

PINKER
Exactly. At least one of those animals had the brains to protect his ears.

BUD

It doesn't exactly play like dumb
panic.

PINKER

What do you mean?

BUD

It's like they knew they were going
to kill everyone before they went
in...

PINKER

Yeah, so...

Bud just stares at the picture of Susan Lefferts.

EXT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE (SAN BERNARDINO) - DAY

A shingle shack dump. Bud walks the front steps, RINGS the
BELL. Hilda Lefferts answers. She doesn't look so good.

BUD

Mrs. Lefferts, I'm Officer White
with the L.A.P.D. I'd like to ask
a couple of questions.

MRS. LEFFERTS

Let my daughter rest in peace.

BUD

Five minutes. That's all.

INT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Pictures of Susan smile down from four walls. Vamp poses on
a nightclub floor. Mrs. Lefferts is all twitchy and nervous,
her eyes darting to a closed door.

BUD

Tell me about the boyfriend she
had. The one you mentioned at the
morgue.

MRS. LEFFERTS

First I want to go on record as
saying that my Susie was a virgin
when she died.

BUD

Ma'am, I'm sure she was.

Mrs. Lefferts talks directly to a photo of her daughter.

MRS. LEFFERTS

Susie, I told you I didn't approve of that boyfriend. He was too old for you. You let him come into this house and be fresh to me. I went out one day and old Mrs. Jensen next door saw Susan's boyfriend and another man and thought she heard a ruckus.

BUD

What was that boyfriend's name?

MRS. LEFFERTS

We were never properly introduced. Susan and I were fighting that day. She called him by a nickname. Muns or Lunts or something.

BUD

Stens? Was it Stens?

MRS. LEFFERTS

Maybe. I don't know.

BUD

Look at a picture for me.

Bud hands her a snapshot of Stensland taken in Tijuana. Out of uniform. She recognizes him.

MRS. LEFFERTS

That's him. That's him.

BUD

You said a neighbor heard a ruckus. Was it outside, inside?

Mrs. Lefferts' eyes go crazy, darting to a closed door. Rolled towels are crammed against the bottom of it.

MRS. LEFFERTS

I don't know. You'll have to leave now, Officer.

Bud starts for the closed door.

BUD

What's through here?

MRS. LEFFERTS

No! Please leave!

Bud kicks away the towels, opens the door, steps into...

DEN

Innocuous except for the smell. It hits Bud right off.

MRS. LEFFERTS

Don't mind the smell. I think a rat died behind the wall... My Susie was a good girl!

BUD

Easy. Tell me about the ruckus.

MRS. LEFFERTS

I came home that night and there was blood on the floor. Susan said Stams -- Stens had cut himself. They were acting nervous. And that Stens kept going under the house.

As Mrs. Lefferts goes shrill, Bud beelines out the door.

EXT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE (SAN BERNARDINO) - DAY

Holding a flashlight, Bud crawls under the house, into...

CRAWLSPACE

Bud elbow-crawls over the dirt, between wooden pilings.

There's a long burlap sack ahead. It smells bad. Bud rips burlap. A rat's nest explodes. Bud sweeps a forearm at them. As they clear, he sees a gristle-caked human skull staring back, a .38 hole in the forehead.

Undaunted, Bud tears the burlap back further. He pats the corpse's pockets, comes up with a wallet. Bud checks the ID. "Turner Meeks." Bus knows him by that name and another.

BUD

Buzz Meeks... Holy shit.

EXT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE - DAY

Bud crawls out, blinking sunlight and gulping fresh air. Mrs. Lefferts is there. She's scared.

MRS. LEFFERTS

Was it... a rat?

BUD
Yeah. A great big one.

Bud opens Meeks' wallet, pulls out a couple hundred bucks and gives them to Mrs. Lefferts.

BUD
Here. Compliments of the Los Angeles Police Department.

INT. FORENSICS LAB - DAY

Ray Pinker looks up from an autopsy as Exley enters.

PINKER
Hey, just in time for our stomach of the week. Frankfurters with sauerkraut, French fries, Coca-Cola, alcohol and sperm. Jesus, what a last supper.

The stiff is Matt Reynolds! Pinker continues working away.

EXLEY
The Nite Owl. Anything bothering you about the case?

PINKER
Yeah. The fact that you guys won't let it get filed away.

EXLEY
What are you talking about?

PINKER
Bud White grilled me on it this morning. You know, he's not as dumb as I thought.

As Exley's head swims...

EXT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE (SAN BERNARDINO) - DAY

Mrs. Lefferts waters the grass, watches as a car pulls up. Exley gets up, starts toward her. She drops the hose and runs for the front door. Exley cuts her off.

MRS. LEFFERTS
Let my Susie rest in peace!

EXLEY

Mrs. Lefferts, I just want to ask a few questions.

MRS. LEFFERTS

That other policeman already checked under the house and found not a thing amiss.

EXLEY

Officer White?

MRS. LEFFERTS

A sweet man.

EXLEY

(thinking out loud)
Under the house.

MRS. LEFFERTS

All he found were rodents. No signs of foul play. So there.

Exley spots the entrance to the crawlspace. He hurries over, enters nearly flat on his belly. Mrs. Lefferts calls in after him.

MRS. LEFFERTS (CONT'D)

My daughter was a virgin!

EXLEY (O.S.)

I don't doubt it -- Oh, God.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - JACK'S DESK - DAY

Jack sits unshaven and hung-over, the dregs of the Scotch bottle on the desk. He considers a framed "Badge of Honor" photo: Jack and Brett Chase, before a banner "To Protect and Serve." Jack punches a fist through it.

INT. LAPD - FORENSICS LAB - DAY

Exley walks alongside as a body bag is wheeled into the lab atop a gurney. Pinker steps over.

EXLEY

I need an I.D. ASAP. You talk only to me on this one.

INT. JACK'S DESK - DAY

Sitting in disgust, Jack spots something amidst all the clutter -- the Great Jerk-Off Books of 1962. He flips one over, looks at the Fleur-de-Lis stamp. Jack remembers something Matt Reynolds told him. He dials the phone.

JACK

Yeah. Sergeant Jack Vincennes requesting. I need the home address on a Pierce Patchett.

OPERATOR (V.O.)

Please hold, Sergeant...

As Jack waits, Exley appears in front of him.

EXLEY

I need to speak to you.

JACK

Give me a minute, will ya?

Exley clicks off the phone.

JACK (CONT'D)

Damnit... What?

EXLEY

I want you to follow Bud White.

JACK

Even I'm not that crazy.

EXLEY

It's not a request. I need to know what White knows. Follow him or I'll have you pulled off 'Badge of Honor.' Permanently.

JACK

Yesterday that might've meant something. Pull me off. You'd be doing me a big favor.

EXLEY

Yesterday yes, today no. What happened last night?

JACK

Transfer me, suspend me. Just leave me alone.

EXLEY
You make a mistake?

JACK
Yeah. My whole life.

Jack stands, heads out. Exley follows; he needs help.

EXLEY
Listen, I think I made a mistake,
too.

JACK
I ain't a priest, Lieutenant. I
can't hear your confession.

EXLEY
Do you make the three Negroes for
the Nite Owl killings?

JACK
What?

EXLEY
It's a simple question.

JACK
You should be the last person who
wants to dig any deeper into the
Nite Owl, Lieutenant.

Exley watches as Jack continues down a hall. Then:

EXLEY
Rollo Tomasi.

Jack stops, looks back at him.

JACK
Is there more to that, or do I have
to guess?

EXLEY
Rollo was a purse snatcher. My
father ran into him off duty. He
shot my father six times and got
away clean. No one even knew who
he was. I made the name up to give
him some personality.

JACK
So what's the point?

EXLEY

Rollo's the reason I became a cop. I wanted to catch the guys who thought they could get away with it. It was supposed to be about truth and justice and Rollo. But somewhere along the way I forgot all that... How about you, Jack? Why'd you become a cop?

Jack looks like he might cry, but smiles instead.

JACK

I don't remember...

Both men are quiet a moment.

JACK (CONT'D)

I'm trying to figure what angle you're playing this time, but I sure as hell can't see one.

EXLEY

I've given up angles for awhile. I just want to solve this thing.

JACK

The Nite Owl was solved, Lieutenant.

EXLEY

I want to do it right.

So does Jack.

JACK

Okay, college boy, I'll help you. But I want half the collar.

EXLEY

A third. I don't think we can make a case without Bud White.

EXT. BROWN DERBY - DAY

A Packard pulls up out front. Bud gets out, heads inside. Another car pulls up across the street.

CLOSE ON JACK

Watching Bud. Jack gets out, starts across the street.

INT. BROWN DERBY - BAR - DAY

At the bar, Johnny Stompanato looks over as Bud joins him. Stompanato isn't happy about it, but he smiles anyway.

STOMPANATO
Wendell White, how's tricks,
paesano?

BUD
I ain't your paesano, you wop
cocksucker.

Nervous, Johnny taps his pinkie ring on a bottle of beer.

STOMPANATO
What do you want, officer?

BUD
You remember an ex-cop named Buzz
Meeks? He works for a guy named
Patchett.

Johnny taps his ring harder. The bottle almost tips.

STOMPANATO
Should I?

BUD
His file listed you as a known
associate. Now spill.

STOMPANATO
Oh, yeah. That was a long time
ago. Before your day. The last
few years he's been muscle for
hire. But I heard he's
disappeared.

BUD
More.

STOMPANATO
More's gonna cost you.

Bud's hand flashes out, grabs Stompanato by the crotch.

BUD
How 'bout I give you your balls
back?

STOMPANATO
(in considerable pain)
(MORE)

STOMPANATO (CONT'D)

Before Meeks disappeared he was popping off about trying to move eighteen pounds of heroin.

BUD

Bullshit. Where would a two-bit ex-cop get 18 pounds of heroin?

STOMPANATO

Deuce Perkins. Mickey C's narcotics lieutenant. The night he got clipped, eighteen pounds of Mickey's heroin went missing.

Bud loosens his grip. Stompanato gasps for air.

DOOR

Jack peels in, catches a glimpse of Bud and Stompanato. Too far away to hear anything, Jack quickly ducks out.

BAR

Stompanato's recovering.

STOMPANATO

Meeks is probably in Rio or someplace like that by now.

BUD

He's under a tract house in San Berdoo. And he don't smell too good. What happened to the heroin, Johnny?

STOMPANATO

I don't know. I swear it!

Bud starts to raise a hand. Stompanato cringes, but Bud just slaps a twenty down on the bar and goes.

INT. BROWN DERBY - PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Jack's on the phone to Exley.

JACK

He's in the Brown Derby with Johnny Stompanato.

(sees Bud exit)

Check that. I gotta go.

EXT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - DAY

Jack pulls up, sees Bud knock on the front door. It opens and Bud steps in. Jack doesn't see who opens it.

EXT. BUSHES - 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - DAY

LEAVES RUSTLE. There's movement in the underbrush. Jack appears, followed by Exley. Jack pulls a gun as they near a window.

EXLEY

What's that for?

JACK

Bud White. He sees us and we're dead.

They press up to the glass for a partial view. Bud White sits on a footstool massaging a pair of women's feet. Jack and Exley exchange a long, curious look. This isn't the Bud White they're used to. A pair of woman's hands take Bud, the arms covered in glitter and satin.

The woman, Lynn Bracken, leans forward to kiss her policeman. It may have been a long day, but she's every inch Veronica Lake. Only the hair's not over her eye.

They stand, kiss again. Lynn's gown spills down around her ankles. Bud scoops Lynn into his arms and the two of them disappear into a bedroom. A long beat before...

JACK (CONT'D)

Jesus... Maybe White's not so dumb after all.

EXLEY

Rita Hayworth at the morgue and now Veronica Lake with White. What the hell's going on?

JACK

Movie star hookers. Whatever you desire... It's Fleur-fr-Lis again.

EXLEY

What's Fleur-de-Lis?

JACK

High line whores. With plastic surgery to look like movie stars. And who knows what else?

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

It's run by this guy Pierce
Patchett. You want to talk to him?

EXLEY

Yeah. But first I want to brace
Stompanato.

INT. BROWN DERBY - ENTRANCE - DAY

Exley and Jack enter.

EXLEY

Check the bar. I got the
restaurant.

RESTAURANT

Exley scans. There's Stompanato
with a girl who looks amazingly
like "LANA TURNER."

Engrossed, Stompanato doesn't look up till Exley's nearly on
top of him.

STOMPANATO

Hey, you want an autograph, write
to M-G-M.

EXLEY

Since when do two-bit hoods and
hookers give out autographs?

STOMPANATO

What?

As Stompanato stands, Exley flashes his badge.

EXLEY

L.A.P.D. Sit down.

"LANA"

Who in the hell do you think you
are?

EXLEY

Take a walk, honey, before I haul
your ass downtown.

"LANA"

Who in the hell do you think are?!

STOMPANATO

You are making a large mistake.

As Jack arrives, Lana tosses a drink in Exley's face.

"LANA"
Get away from our table!

EXLEY
(grabs her wrist)
Shut up. Being cut to look like
Lana Turner doesn't mean you are
Lana Turner.

Jack pulls him aside.

JACK
She is Lana Turner.

EXLEY
What?

JACK
She is Lana Turner.

INT. EXLEY'S PLYMOUTH - SUNSET

Rolling. The sky glows ahead.

EXLEY
How was I supposed to know?

A moment before Jack begins to laugh. Exley joins him.

EXT. 1184 GRETNA GREEN (PIERCE PATCHETT'S) - NIGHT

Exley's Plymouth is parked on the street.

INT. 1184 GRETNA GREEN (PATCHETT'S) - LIBRARY - NIGHT

In a silk robe, the unflappable Pierce Patchett smiles at Exley. Jack stands alongside.

PATCHETT
I believe the Nite Owl's your area
of expertise, Mr. Exley. I saw you
on television getting your medal.
(turns to Jack)
And you're that other celebrity
Hollywood policeman, aren't you?

A beat. Exley and Jack don't look like they appreciate being joked with. Patchett finally sighs.

PATCHETT (CONT'D)
 I'll tell you what I told Officer
 White when he asked me about
 Susan's death.

EXLEY
 (a look to Jack)
 Bud White's been here?

PATCHETT
 For the last time. I may suborn
 women into illicit activities, but
 they're handsomely compensated, I
 treat them well and make sure the
 men they deal with show them every
 due respect.

EXLEY
 Is the Veronica Lake look-alike one
 of your whores?

PATCHETT
 A vulgar term, but yes.

EXLEY
 What's her name?

PATCHETT
 Lynn Bracken.

EXLEY
 Why's she seeing Bud White?

PATCHETT
 Why do men and women usually see
 each other?

EXLEY
 Anything else you want to add
 before I talk to her?

PATCHETT
 No.

EXLEY
 Not good enough.

PATCHETT
 (unfazed)
 Then try talking to my lawyer. Good
 evening, gentlemen.

EXT. 1184 GRETNA GREEN - NIGHT

Exley and Jack head for the car.

JACK
Guy's as cool as they come.

A call CRACKLES in over Exley's RADIO. Exley picks up.

EXLEY
This is Exley.

DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Ray Pinker wants to talk to you,
Lieutenant. Says he has your I.D.

EXLEY
Tell him Sergeant Vincennes is
coming in to talk to him.

JACK
What are you going to do?

EXLEY
I'm going to Lynn Bracken's. I'll
meet you at the Dining Car.

JACK
Great. You get the girl, I get the
coroner.

INT. LIBRARY (1184 GRETNA GREEN) - NIGHT

Watching Exley and Vincennes from the window, Patchett picks
up the phone, dials.

HUDGEONS (V.O.)
(over phone)
Hush-Hush. Off the record and on
the Q.T.

INT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN'S) - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

KNOCKING on the door. Lynn answers to reveal Exley.

EXLEY
Miss Bracken, I'm Lieutenant Exley.

LYNN
I know who you are. You're the
policeman Bud told me about.

EXLEY

Really? What did White say?

LYNN

He said you were smart. He also said you were competing with your dead father. How did he put it? Trying to measure up to a ghost.

Exley lets it pass. As he enters...

EXLEY

Let's concentrate on my smarts. Pierce Patchett made you, didn't he? He taught you how to dress and talk and think and I am very impressed with the results. But I need some answers and if I don't get them, I'm going to take you and Patchett down.

LYNN

He can take care of himself and I'm not afraid of you. And you forgot one thing, Lieutenant. Pierce also taught me how to fuck... Can I get you a drink?

Exley can't help but smile. Lynn smiles back.

EXLEY

Scotch.

Exley watches her as she steps over to fix the drinks.

LYNN

I'm curious about you.

EXLEY

Why?

She hands him his drink.

LYNN

Because Bud hates you more than he loves me.

Exley stews. Lynn watches him over the rim of her glass.

LYNN (CONT'D)

It galls you that I know so much about you. You don't have information to compete.

EXLEY

Don't underestimate me, Miss
Bracken.

LYNN

The way you've underestimated Bud
White?

Exley's had it. A menacing step forward. Lynn's smile becomes a laugh. Lost to himself, Exley leans in and kisses her. Lynn pulls back, then kisses back. In a beat, they're rolling to the floor, shedding clothes.

As they trash the furniture, Lynn looks over his shoulder at her own reflection in a closet door mirror.

REVERSE ANGLE - INSIDE CLOSET

Two-way glass. Sid Hudgeons is in here SNAPPING pictures. As Lynn and Exley continue with their frantic lovemaking...

INT. FORENSIC LAB - NIGHT

Ray Pinker rubs his tired eyes.

PINKER

God bless dental records. Stiff
used to be a cop. Turner Meeks.

JACK

Buzz Meeks?

PINKER

You knew him?

JACK

Of him. He was around when I first
joined the force. A bad egg.

Pinker could care less. As Jack's wheels turn...

INT. LAPD - RECORDS ROOM - NIGHT

Jack searches dusty filing cabinets with dates like 1939 and 1940. Reading one headed "Meeks," Jack lets out a low whistle. He's found something.

INT. PACIFIC DINING CAR - NIGHT

Jack waits at the bar, watches the door anxiously.

JACK
Come on, Exley. Where are you?

INT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN'S) - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Spent, Exley and Lynn sit, half-dressed, on the floor. They're quiet. Then, through a smile:

EXLEY
How was I?

LYNN
Oh, the best I ever had. Absolutely the best.

EXLEY
(laughs)
You sound like you mean it.

LYNN
The silver screen's loss is your gain.

EXLEY
How about White?

LYNN
You want to know what Bud's like in bed?

She actually embarrasses him with that one.

EXLEY
I want to know why you see him. Is it a Patchett payoff?

LYNN
I see Bud because I want to. I see Bud because he can't hide the warmth he has inside him.

EXLEY
I'll take your word for it.

LYNN
I see Bud because he makes me feel like Lynn Bracken and not some Veronica Lake look-alike who fucks for money. I see him because he doesn't know how to disguise who he is. There's more if you want to hear it.

Exley shakes his head. He's heard enough.

LYNN (CONT'D)

Does all that make it harder for you to hate him or easier?

EXLEY

I don't hate White. I really don't. It's just, in my business, it's the wild cars you have to watch out for.

LYNN

You don't like that you don't know how to play him. He doesn't follow the same rules of politics you do. That makes him dangerous.

EXLEY

You cut to the heart of things, don't you? What about Lynn Bracken? She going to be a hooker all her life?

LYNN

I came out here with a dream. That's gone, but I settled for reality.

EXLEY

Some reality.

LYNN

No. This is the means to the reality. But I'm not going to tell you what it is.

EXLEY

Why not?

LYNN

Because you'll use it against me. Won't you?

Exley doesn't answer, but the answer is yes. Lynn smiles.

LYNN (CONT'D)

You're tougher than Bud thinks you are.

EXLEY

(smiles)

You're the first person to ever call me tough.

LYNN

Like recognizes like. I'm pretty tough, myself.

EXLEY

You, me and White, huh?

LYNN

Actually, Bud's only tough on the outside.

As Exley kisses her...

IN CLOSET

Exasperated that he's still stuck in here, Sid Hudgeons checks his watch, shakes his head in disgust.

EXT. 9608 VENDOME (SILVERLAKE) - NIGHT

Jack knocks at a darkened house. The porch lights come on. The door opens to reveal Dudley Smith in his bathrobe.

DUDLEY

John Vincennes. It's three A.M., lad.

JACK

Two minutes, Dudley. It's important.

DUDLEY

Lucky for you that my wife and four fair daughters are at the beach in Santa Barbara.

INT. 9608 VENDOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jack sits at the table while Dudley makes coffee.

JACK

You remember Buzz Meeks, Dudley?

DUDLEY

A disgrace as a policeman. Straight D fitness reports from every C.O. he ever served under. What about him?

JACK

Twelve years ago he worked a vice roust with Dick Stensland.

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

They arrested a Pierce Patchett on an extortion scam. Guy ran hookers. He'd have them photographed with their johns, then double-dip for some blackmail. Charges got dropped. Insufficient evidence. You were supervising officer on the case and I was wondering if you remember anything about it.

DUDLEY

What's this all about, lad?

JACK

Part of it has to do with a murder. I've been working with Ed Exley on it.

DUDLEY

You're Narco, lad, not Homicide. And since when do you work with Edmund?

JACK

It's a private investigation. I fucked something up and I want to make amends.

DUDLEY

(smiles, then...)

Don't start trying to do the right thing, John. You haven't had enough practice.

Dudley walks over, hands Jack his coffee.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

Have you discussed this with anyone else, John?

JACK

No.

DUDLEY

Not even with Exley?

Jack shakes his head. Dudley raises a REVOLVER. He FIRES it at point-blank range, right into Jack's heart. Jack hits the floor, his cheek pressed flat on the linoleum.

Jack opens his mouth to speak. His lips form the words, but no sound comes out. Dudley crouches down beside him.

JACK

Have you a valediction, lad?

Dudley leans low, gives Jack an ear. As he dies...

JACK (CONT'D)

Rollo Tomasi...

Dudley frowns in ignorance at the name.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Nothing mobilizes the police like losing one of their own. Dudley is at the podium along with Exley. Dozens of detectives take notes, including Bud White.

DUDLEY

Sergeant Vincennes' body was found in Echo Park at ten o'clock this morning. Killed by a single .38 round to the heart. One of our own, gentlemen. We cannot tolerate it. Justice must be swift and merciless. That's all.

As the men move odd, Dudley approaches Exley.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

Edmund, a word with you. We received a tip this morning. Did Vincennes ever mention the name Rollo Tomasi?

Exley tries to look like he's thinking as Jack calls from the grave. Screaming the name Dudley!

EXLEY

No... Where'd the tip come from?

DUDLEY

Anonymous. Probably nothing.

As Dudley moves off, Exley watches him go. Scared.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - BUD WHITE'S DESK - DAY

Bud looks over as Dudley sits down across from him.

DUDLEY

You're perplexing to me these days, Wendell. You're not your old, cruel self anymore.

(MORE)

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

I need proof that the extracurricular work I had planned for you remains within your grasp.

BUD

What work?

DUDLEY

I've long been involved in containing hard crime in such a way that myself and a few colleagues might someday enjoy a profit dispensation. That day will soon be here and you'll share handsomely. Grand means will be in our hands, Wendell.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

Imagine crime limited to the criminal element who perpetrate it. Imagine the means to keep the nigger filth sedated. But don't stop there. Extrapolate. Imagine the police in control. It's big, lad.

BUD

You lost me, Dudley. I don't know what you're talking about.

DUDLEY

You have your extracurricular secrets, I have mine. We'll hold a clarification session soon. For now, I need your fearsome old habits at the Victory Motel. We're going to brace a man who may know who killed Jack Vincennes. Can I count on you?

BUD

Sure, boss. Sure you can.

INT. FORENSICS LAB - DAY

Pinker looks up as Exley enters.

EXLEY

I want to know what you and Jack Vincennes talked about last night. Anything and everything. Start with the I.D. on the corpse.

A put-upon Pinker sighs.

PINKER

An ex-cop. Buzz Meeks. I pulled his police academy photo.

Pinker goes to his desk for a twenty-year-old photo of Meeks. he hands it to Exley, whose wheels are turning.

EXLEY

We got a dead ex-cop and a girl who looks like Rita Hayworth at the Nite Owl. Another dead ex-cop under the house of Rita's mother. It's not a good week for ex-cops.

PINKER

I got Vincennes in the next room. It's not a good week for cops in general.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - DAY

A RAIN STORM has turned the courtyard into a mud bath. As usual, a light burns in room six. Bud White parks alongside the other cars already here. He makes a dash for the door.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM SIX - DAY

Sid Hudgeons is cuffed to the hot seat. Dudley sits across from him. Dudley's henchman Breuning looms. Bud enters.

DUDLEY

This is Mr. Hudgeons, Wendell.

HUDGEONS

I'm happy to cooperate. You don't need to tie me down.

DUDLEY

It's for your own safety. Now what can you tell us about Sergeant John Vincennes?

HUDGEONS

Trashcan Jack. The Big V. I can tell you he's on the Night Train to the big adios.

Breuning cuffs Hudgeons in the side of the head.

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

Take it easy! I didn't have anything to do with him getting killed if that's what you mean.

DUDLEY

But you were business associates?

HUDGEONS

What does that have to do --

Breuning cuffs him again.

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

Okay so we worked together. It was an information exchange. I got him first class collars and he got me good stories. We were friends for Chrissakes!

DUDLEY

Alright. We'll drop that line for now. Next topic. Please comment on Pierce Patchett.

Bud looks over at mention of the name.

HUDGEONS

You think he had something to do with Vincennes getting iced?

Dudley sighs, looks to Bud.

DUDLEY

Wendell. I want full and docile cooperation on all topics.

Hudgeons flinches as Bud steps up, twice Breuning's size.

HUDGEONS

Okay. Okay. Everyone knows Patchett's worth a boat-load of greenbacks. From aviation, freeway construction. But the man has hobbies, too. He bankrolls B movies under the table and runs movie star look-alike hookers. And try this on: he's rumored to be a periodic heroin sniffer. All in all a powerful behind-the-scenes strange-o.

DUDLEY

And?

HUDGEONS

And what?

Bud digs a fist into Hudgeons' gut. As Hudgeons gasps to get his breath back.

DUDLEY

Reciprocity, Mr. Hudgeons, is the key to all relationships.

HUDGEONS

He runs call girls. Primo tail. Fixed up like movie stars.

Bud looms, rests his hands on the back of Hudgeons' chair. He doesn't like where this is going.

DUDLEY

And?

HUDGEONS

In my car. Blackmail shit. The trunk under the carpet. Patchett got me to photograph a cop fucking this gorgeous cunt Lynn, looks just like Veronicaaa --

Wooden slats pop as Bud tears the bolted chair right out of the floor. Hudgeons and the chair land sideways.

DUDLEY

Wendell!

Bud can't hear him. He uprights the chair one-handed. As his fist cocks back, he's restrained by Breuning and Dudley. This is no act. They can barely hold Bud back.

HUDGEONS

Get him away from me!

Bud breaks free, heads outside.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - HUDGEONS' CAR - DAY

Bud jams a tire iron into the trunk seam and pops it with a ferocious yank. He tears at the carpeting. A manila envelope. Bud rips it open and 8x10 glossies of Exley and Lynn spill out. Raindrops dot them, as Bud's in his Packard and tearing out of there.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM 6 - DAY

Dudley and Breuning watch from the door.

DUDLEY

I wouldn't trade places with Edmund
Exley right now for all the tea in
China.

Breuning laughs. So does Hudgeons.

HUDGEONS

Dudley, I thought you were gonna
let the dumb bastard kill me.
(to Breuning)
And you! Learn to pull those
punches a little better.

Dudley and Breuning stare at him. A bit grimly.

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

You can uncuff me now, fellas.

But no one moves to do so.

HUDGEONS (CONT'D)

Fellas?
(nervous)
We had a deal. You, me and
Patchett, We're a team!
(scared)
Come on, we're friends. We're --

As Hudgeons protests, Dudley slaps a hand over his mouth.

DUDLEY

Hush-hush...

As Breuning and Carlisle move in...

INT. RECORDS ROOM - LAPD - DAY

A wormish CLERK searches dusty filing cabinets with dates
like 1939 and 1940. The same ones Jack looked through. Exley
steps over from another row.

EXLEY

Anything?

CLERK

Nothing.

EXLEY

So on active duty, Meeks didn't
make an arrest from 1938 to '43.

CLERK

Someone must've pulled the records.

Exley ponders the implications. Taking out the photo of
Meeks, he gets an idea.

EXLEY

Where are the police academy files?

CLERK

I don't have time. I have --

EXLEY

Just show me where they are!

EXT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - DAY

Blue, Lynn sits on her porch watching the rain come down. A
SCREECHING on the wet street as Bud's PACKARD pulls up. She
watches as he gets out and starts for the house. Lynn stands,
holds her arms out. Bud stops short on the steps, out of
reach, the rain soaking him.

BUD

Did you talk to Exley?

LYNN

Come in out of the rain. In the
morning we'll have both our stories
for breakfast.

Lightning flashes. Bud shakes his head.

BUD

I want to know about Exley.

LYNN

He's the opposite of you. He's
more like me. Cold, calculating.

BUD

How'd you get to know so much about
him?

More lightning. Lynn looks God-awful sad.

LYNN

Come in out of the rain, Bud.

BUD
You gonna tell me what happened
with you and Exley?

LYNN
We talked.

BUD
So tell me about it.

LYNN
(looking away)
In the morning.

BUD
No. Now.
(a beat)
You fucked him.

Too tired to lie anymore, Lynn finally just nods.

LYNN
I thought I was helping you. I
thought --

Bud backhands her, hard. Lynn faces straight into the next one as Bud hits her again. A third time as the sins of the father are visited on the son. Bud stops short as the self-realization slams home. Lynn waits stoically. She doesn't start crying till Bud turns and runs back into the rain.

INT. RECORDS ROOM - LAPD - DAY

Drawers are open. Files are everywhere. Exley's reached the end of the line. As he looks through one last file, he finds a stack of official photos. Then he stops short. There's a photo of four cadets and an academy instructor.

Two of the cadets are IDed as Turner Meeks and Dick Stensland. The instructor is Dudley Smith!

Exley looks up at the sound of FOOTSTEPS and Bud is there. Fury. He slams Exley, knocks him flat.

Bud's here to kill him. He hauls Exley up, pummels him, then throws him over the table. Then up into a wall. Plaster cracks. Bud's on some gonzo animal plane. Bud strangles him. Exley gags. It'll be over in moments.

Until Exley's flailing hands finds Bud's .38. Yanking it from his waistband, Exley smashes Bud in the forehead. Bud reels. But, blind with rage, he moves back in only to have the barrel of the .38 placed right between his eyes.

EXLEY
Why?

BUD
Lynn.

EXLEY
She told you?

Bud shakes his head. He's coiled, ready to make a move.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
Who told you? Did Dudley have
anything to do with you finding
out?

Bud hesitates, the answer obvious.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
Listen to me. Dudley killed Jack.
It has something to do with Buzz
Meeks.

Exley points out the academy photo on the floor.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
Look. Dudley and Meeks go way
back. Stensland, too.

Bud sees, but does he really? As Bud reaches for the photo, Exley relaxes slightly. Bud slaps the gun away, drops Exley to the ground. He grabs, begins slamming his head into the floor.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
Think, goddamn you. Think...

Exley's almost out. But maybe Bud heard him. The attack slows, stops as Bud does think. Exley stays conscious.

BUD
I knew Stensland and Meeks knew
each other. Meeks was with Sue
Lefferts on Christmas Eve. The
night I met Lynn. Lefferts' mother
I.D.ed Stensland as Lefferts'
boyfriend, but Stens pretended he
didn't know either one of them.

EXLEY
Stensland and Meeks. What were
they up to?

BUD

Johnny Stompanato told me when Meeks disappeared, he was trying to move the 18 pounds of heroin that went missing when Deuce Perkins was shot.

EXLEY

Stensland and Buzz Meeks. Two-man triggers knocking off Mickey Cohen lieutenants. When they killed Deuce Perkins, they got heroin as a bonus.

BUD

Then something goes wrong. Meeks gets killed. Maybe Stens got greedy, killed Meeks and left him under his girlfriend's house.

(a beat)

The night he died, Stens was all mysterious. Said he had something big going down.

EXLEY

The Nite Owl! Stensland was going there to sell the heroin.

BUD

Somebody got wind of it, killed them all.

EXLEY

It wasn't the Negroes. The Griffith Park report was a phony. And, who says the purple Merc was spotted outside the Nite Owl?

BUD

Dudley.

EXLEY

The first guys to the car when Jack and I got there were Bruening and Carlisle.

BUD

Dudley's guys.

EXLEY

They didn't find the shotguns. They planted them.

BUD

It all keeps coming back to Dudley.

EXLEY

It's Dudley for the Nite Owl.

They just stare at each other a beat as it sinks in.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

Pierce Patchett figures in, too.
That's the angle Jack was working.
Dudley must work for Patchett.

BUD

Let's just kill them.

EXLEY

What?

BUD

For Jack, for Stensland, for
anybody else who got in the way.
I've been trying to be smart. A
detective. But killing those two
fuckers, that would be justice.

EXLEY

Stay smart, Bud. We build a case.
We play by the rules.

BUD

There are no rules! Why the fuck
are you doing this? The Nite Owl
made you. You want to tear all
that down.

EXLEY

With a wrecking ball. You want to
help me swing it?

Bud smiles. For a second he likes Exley.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

Let's go see Pierce Patchett. Run
a good-cop-bad-cop.

BUD

Which one are you and which one am

I?

EXT. 1184 GRETNA GREEN (PIERCE PATCHETT'S) - DAY

Exley and Bud make their way up the walk. Bud pulls his .38 from its shoulder holster, shoves it in his waistband.

EXLEY

You expecting problems?

BUD

Patchett uses a lot of ex-cop muscle.

FRONT DOOR

Exley RINGS the BUZZER. Looking back, Bud sees a pitching wedge and pile of golf balls abandoned in the grass. A single ball floats in the koi pond. Bud's eyes narrow at the sight. Not like Patchett at all.

BUD

Come on.

And Bud shoulders the heavy door right off its hinges.

INT. 1184 GRETNA GREEN - HALLWAY - DAY

Bud draws his .38 as he strides in. Exley tries to keep up.

EXLEY

(a screaming whisper)
What?

Double doors on the left open into a library. Bud stops short, slowly lowers his gun. Exley steps up beside him.

LIBRARY

Hanging from a ceiling light, Patchett's body slowly twists around, a toppled chair beneath him.

EXLEY

I don't think his ex-cop did him much good.

Bud goes to the body while Exley heads for a side table on which rests a typed sheet of paper.

Bud checks Patchett's right hand, the knuckles are split, two of the fingers badly distended.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

It's a suicide note. Says he killed Jack because Jack had figured out a pornography scam Patchett was running.

BUD

He had help getting up there. Two of his fingers are broken.

EXLEY

We had one thing figured wrong. I don't think Dudley worked for Patchett.

BUD

At least not anymore.

EXLEY

Patchett's dead. He sent you after me. I'd say Dudley's tying up his loose ends.

BUD

(it hits him)

Lynn.

Bud dashes to the PHONE, dials. It RINGS. No one answers.

EXLEY

I got a guy who owes me in the Sheriff's department. West Hollywood station. He can be at her house in two minutes.

Bud shoves the phone into his hand.

BUD

Call him.

EXT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - DAY

A county sheriff's unmarked parked out front. A DEPUTY behind the wheel. Exley's Plymouth pulls up behind. The Deputy gets out. MOVE WITH him as he steps BACK TO Exley, who's rolling down his window.

EXLEY

Is she inside?

DEPUTY

We took her to Hollywood Station for safekeeping.

(MORE)

DEPUTY (CONT'D)

Someone worked her over pretty good. She wouldn't say who.

Exley looks at Bud. Bud looks down in shame.

EXLEY

Hold her as Joan Smith. No one sees her unless I okay it.

DEPUTY

You got it, Exley. And now we're even.

As the Deputy moves off.

EXLEY

Ellis Loew.

BUD

What about him?

EXLEY

Jack thought he was up to his neck in all this.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OUTER OFFICE - DAY

A SECRETARY looks up as Bud and Exley beeline Loew's door.

SECRETARY

You can't go in there!

INNER OFFICE

Loew looks up as they burst in.

SECRETARY

Do you want me to call the police, Mr. Loew?

EXLEY

Ask for Captain Dudley Smith. We'll have a party. Hot dogs and sauerkraut.

A beat as Loew considers his options.

LOEW

It's okay. These are police.
(as she leaves)
What do you want?

EXLEY

I want D.A. bureau men to tail Dudley Smith twenty-four hours a day; I want you to get a judge to authorize a wire tap on his home phone; I want authorization to check his bank records and I want it all in an hour.

LOEW

On what evidence?

EXLEY

None. Call it a hunch.

LOEW

(incredulous)

Absolutely not. Dudley Smith is a highly decorated member of this city's police department and I won't smear his name without --

EXLEY

Without what, his smearing yours first? What's he got on you, Loew? Pictures of you and an out of work actor with your pants down?

LOEW

Do you have any proof?

EXLEY

The proof had his throat slit.
(a beat)
So far you're not denying it.

LOEW

I'm not going to dignify you with answers. If you'll excuse me, I've got a Jack Vincennes press conference to prepare for.

Loew enters his bathroom. Bud looks to Exley who nods: Go.

OFFICE BATHROOM

Loew is at the mirror clipping a few stray nose hairs. Bud enters full of menace followed by Exley.

LOEW

Unless you're here to wipe my ass, I think we're through.

Bud just glares at him. Loew shakes his head.

LOEW (CONT'D)

Don't try this good cop/bad cop
with me. I practically invented
it. And so what if some homo actor
is dead. Boys, girls, ten of them
step off the bus to L.A. every day.

The MIRROR SPIDERWEBS as Bud slams Loew's face into it. Bud swings him around, forces him forward and shoves his head in the toilet.

He holds it there, finally lets Loew up for breath. Then backhands: one, two, three.

BUD

Dudley Smith. Spill.

LOEW

Call him off, Exley!

EXLEY

I don't know how.

More backhands. Holding Loew by the scruff of the neck, Bud marches him past Exley and back into the...

INNER OFFICE

Bud heaves up the window,
practically throws Loew through it.
Loew catches hold of the window
framing. Bud hammers his hands
loose with a fist and pushes him
through.

OUTSIDE

Bud holds his leg. Loew screams as
coins, comb and wallet spill from
his pockets, plummet toward the
street below.

INNER OFFICE

Bud shakes Loew, could drop him at
any time.

EXLEY

Bud...

BUD

If I let you go, there'll be ten
more lawyers to take your place
tomorrow. They just won't come on
the bus, that's all.

OUTSIDE

We hear Loew's PANT LEG TEARING loose.

LOEW

Okay! You're right! Dudley's got photos of me and Reynolds.

EXLEY

What's Dudley's scheme?

More TEARING. Loew's life may depend on the answer.

LOEW

Dudley's rotten to the core. He's taking over Mickey Cohen's rackets, his own hand-picked cops'll be the new franchise holders. Because of those pictures I won't be able to prosecute. Oh Jesus pull me up!

INNER OFFICE

Exley helps pull Loew back inside. Bud dumps him on the floor. Bruised and bloodied, Loew looks up at Exley.

LOEW

Dudley's got everyone under his thumb. Not just me, but the Chief of Police, the lieutenant governor, everybody!

Exley pulls his .38, shoves it into the side of Loew's neck.

EXLEY

Not everybody. You tip-off Dudley and Officer White visits you alone next time.

Loew looks at Bud, nods, his face a bloody mess.

EXT. CITY OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Exley and Bud exit. Bud's wheels are turning.

BUD

They never made a match on the shotgun serial numbers. What if Breuning and Carlisle took them from the evidence room? Couple of cold pieces that had been hanging around a year or two.

EXLEY

We should check the records, and,
we should talk to Lynn.

Bud just stares at him a beat.

EXLEY

You want to talk to her?

Bud looks away, shakes his head "no." Finally...

BUD

You do it. I'll check the files.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Lynn looks up as Exley enters. her face is puffy, swollen.

LYNN

(dry)

If I knew you were coming I'd have
baked a cake.

EXLEY

Forget everything else for a
second, Lynn. Is there anything
you can give me on Dudley Smith?

A blank look from her.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

A police captain. I think he's
behind all of this.

LYNN

(shakes her head)

I work for Patchett. I had a
feeling that there was someone
else, but I never knew who.

EXLEY

Okay. Look, if it helps, Bud hates
himself for what he did.

LYNN

(a beat)

I know how he feels.

A beat as Exley wonders how he should interpret this.

EXLEY

I don't know if it's pathetic or
romantic, but when this is all over
I'd like to see you again.

Lynn looks away, can't help an ironic smile even as she
starts to cry. As Exley gives her his handkerchief...

INT. LAPD - EVIDENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Bud waits at the cage window as a RECORDER returns with some
information.

RECORDER

I got your guns, Bud. Signed in
April 3rd, 1950. Remember the
First Western bank robbery? They
were used in that.

BUD

I want to see them.

RECORDER

No can do. I can't find them.

As Bud thinks, a ROOKIE-TYPE approaches.

ROOKIE-TYPE

Uh -- Sergeant White?

BUD

What?

ROOKIE-TYPE

Dispatch just got a call for you.
Lieutenant Exley wants you to meet
him at the Victory Motel.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - SUNSET

Bud's Packard crests the rise looking down on the Victory.
Exley's Plymouth is in the courtyard.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM 6 - SUNSET

Exley in the hotseat. Sitting there thinking. At a CAR DOOR
CLOSING, he goes to the door.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Exley opens the door as Bud
approaches, toting a shotgun.
(MORE)

ANOTHER ANGLE (CONT'D)

The sun is down. The sky is just a dull glow.

BUD

You wanted to meet here?

EXLEY

Me? You called it. I got a message that...

As the reality sinks in, Bud and Exley hear TIRES on the GRAVEL; CARS are COMING. Being in a concavity, they don't see them yet. Then the CARS STOP. But still Bud and Exley can't see anything. They hear the CLICKS of CAR DOORS OPENING, but they don't hear them shut. There are FOOTSTEPS, MURMURED WHISPERS. More CARS PULL UP.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

Shit... Come on.

Exley starts for his car, but Bud holds him back.

BUD

Too late.

A beat. Resigned, Exley nods. They retreat back to Room disappear inside. A beat. There's MOVEMENT in the shadows to the left. To the right.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM 6 - NIGHT

There's a big back window. Bud covers most of it with a ratty old mattress. He pumps the shotgun.

He pulls a .45 automatic from his waistband.

BUD

Here.

He throws the auto to Exley, pulls out a .38. Bud's armed for bear.

EXLEY

You figured this was a set-up? And you showed up anyway?

BUD

A lot of bad stuff happened here. It's as good a place as any for it to end.

Bud switches off the light. They wait in silence. Then:

EXLEY

You know, all I ever wanted was to
measure up to my father.

BUD

(softly)

I spent years trying not to live
down to mine.

BUD (CONT'D)

(thinking)

We should block off the bathroom.
They could come through --

A CREAK outside the front door. Bud levels the SHOTGUN.
BOOM! The DOOR is BLOWN OFF ITS HINGES. We see the figure
of a man sprawl back in the dirt. In the darkness beyond,
MUZZLE FLASHES from all around. Exley and Bud

RETURN FIRE.

We hear the BACK WINDOW BREAK under a MUFFLED BLOW. Bud
charges back, yanks down the mattress revealing two men
climbing through. Sitting ducks: torn apart by THREE TRIPLE-
AUGHT ROUNDS close in. A beat, then...

EXLEY

We got him!

Bud smiles, in on the plan as theres an answering WHOOP. A
third man looks through the window. BOOM! Bud nails him.

Bud motions Exley to stay put, then slips out the window.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - NIGHT

Bud crouches, looks between the cinder blocks supporting the
room. Two sets of feet shuffling along. Bud FIRES the
SHOTGUN. Shrieks as the men go down. Bud extends the .38 to
fire point blank headshots. Then...

Bud flattens himself as a wicked CROSSFIRE TEARS UP ROOM

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - NIGHT

Exley is forced down as well, lying flat as plaster rains
down.

The door frame splinters as more Dudley men charge in. Four
men with rifles. One is Patchett's Burly Bodyguard. They
spot Exley lying there.

Hushed whispers as they approach: "Dead meat." "Be careful." Kicks in the side. The men look at each other, sneer.

Exley jerks a foot. The foot man stumbles as Exley spins around SHOOTING. FIRING the .45 and his own .38. All four men go down. Exley stands, digs into his pocket to reload.

Bud scrambles back through the window. Exley looks over and smiles as Bud reloads the shotgun. It's dead quiet.

EXLEY

I'm thinking we might walk away
from this.

At that instant, Dudley steps through the bathroom door. He's got Exley dead to rights. As he squeezes the trigger, Bud leaps forward, pushes Exley hard to the ground.

The SHOT passes through Bud's back by his left shoulder blade. It spins him around. A SECOND SHOT to the stomach slows him to a walk as he charges Dudley. A THIRD ROUND SHATTERS Bud's jaw, but still he comes. Driven by rage, his hands reaching for Dudley's throat. He even gets hold before a FOURTH SLUG tears his chest.

Bud falls hard.

Dudley swings his aim to Exley who's just managed to shake the cobwebs of being flattened by Bud. A frozen moment.

DUDLEY

I'm loathe to kill my brother
officers, Edmund.

EXLEY

Tell that to Jack Vincennes. To
Stensland.

DUDLEY

Jack was a shame, but Dick
Stensland had the audacity to try
to sell me my own heroin. Through
his whore girl friend. I sent him
to make the buy. The rest is
history.

EXLEY

Why?

DUDLEY

A vacuum, Edmund. That's what we
have in Los Angeles. Sending
Mickey Cohen up created it.

(MORE)

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

My containment work maintained it.
 Certain photographs guarantee it.
 Organized crime has been held back,
 but there's still a demand for the
 services it provides.

EXLEY

And now you'll provide them.

DUDLEY

Absolutely. Prostitution and
 gambling are victimless crimes. The
 heroin we'll run down to the
 coloreds. Anesthetize them. As
 long as it's not a middle class
 problem, no one will care. It's
 still a crime free city... for
 respectable people.

Dudley aims the .38, cocks back the hammer. We hear

DISTANT POLICE SIRENS.

DUDLEY

This isn't politics, Edmund. There
 won't be winners and losers when
 it's over...

Dudley doesn't see Bud stir, reach into a pocket.

DUDLEY

Just the living and the dead. It's
 always been that way in the Bureau.
 You should've realized that before
 you became a detective.

It's over. Dudley's finger tightens on the trigger. But
 Dudley screams as Bud buries a switchblade into his left
 calf. It took all Bud had left. As he collapses...

Dudley wails; Exley dives for Bud's shotgun. Dudley FIRES,
 misses. A wild SHOTGUN BLAST takes out half the wall.
 Dudley stumbles out the door. SIRENS BLARE.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - NIGHT

Dudley drops his gun as the cruisers stream down. Exley
 steps out behind him, but doesn't drop the shotgun. The two
 of them are bleached white by headlights.

Dudley raises his badge over his head.

DUDLEY
 We're policemen!
 (winks)
 Let me do the talking. They'll
 make you Chief of Detectives.

Exley steps ahead to block his way.

EXLEY
 No.

DUDLEY
 Why not, lad? Absolute justice?

EXLEY
 Something like that.

DUDLEY
 Really? Would you be willing to
 rig crime scene evidence to support
 a prosecuting attorney's working
 hypothesis?

Exley doesn't answer. Dudley smiles.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)
 Would you be willing to beat
 confessions out of suspects you
 knew to be guilty?

Exley glares. Laughing, Dudley brushes by, limps toward the
 gathering policemen.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)
 Are you willing to shoot hardened
 criminals in the back to offset the
 chance they'll --

The SHOTGUN BELCHES flame. Dudley goes down, shot in the
 back. Exley drops the gun, raises his hands over his head.

DISSOLVE TO:

L.A. MONTAGE

"RAGS TO RICHES" PLAYS.

EXT. ROSE BOWL PARADE - DAY

Riding in a convertible, waving to the crowds is the Grand
 Marshal -- the new Vice President, a young Richard Nixon.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

A midnight assembly. The Chief, D.A. Loew and several high ranking brass. Their attention riveted THROUGH the one-way glass into...

INT. ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Bloody, exhausted, Exley sits across from two INTERNAL AFFAIRS DETECTIVES.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS #1
You have a lot of explaining to do,
Lieutenant.

EXLEY
Yes. I do.

As Exley begins...

TELEVISION SCREEN
Where we're informed that tonight's
episode of "Badge of Honor" is:
"Dedicated to the memory of
technical advisor Sergeant Jack
Vincennes."

EXT. VENTURA FREEWAY - CAHUENGA PASS - DAY

A ribbon is cut. Eager motorists roll down the blacktop.

EXT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER - DAY

Ronald Reagan applauds as Jane Wyman plunges her hands into fresh sidewalk cement.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

The brass exchange concerned looks and raised eyebrows as they watch Exley THROUGH the glass, his VOICE heard OVER the SPEAKERS.

INT. UNION STATION - DAY

The Flatnose Frisco loan shark and Cauliflowered Cleveland enforcer seen earlier at the Victory Motel return to L.A., ready to fill the vacuum.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

Hush-Hush is delivered. The headline: "Actor Reynolds in his Final Role: Conductor of the Night Train to Slice City."

INT. ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Exley stares across at the Internal Affairs Detectives.

EXLEY

That's it. That's the whole story.

As Exley looks to the gray-tinted wall mirror...

OBSERVATION ROOM

Loew leans over, whispers to the Chief.

LOEW

The press would have a field day with this.

CHIEF

(a beat)

When in doubt, feed them a hero. In this case, we'll need more than one.

CUT TO:

LOS ANGELES
EXAMINER
HEADLINE:

R.I.P. DUDLEY SMITH

Fabled L.A. Cop Dies Defending City from Organized Crime!

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Exley in his dress blue uniform. The Chief smiles, pins gold stars to his shoulders.

CHIEF

Captain Edmund Exley. Chief of Detectives. Los Angeles Police Department.

Applause. Flashbulbs. Lynn watches from the back as Exley runs a handshake gauntlet. Finally, he spots her.

She's returned to her natural brunette. Looks even better.
Exley steps over.

EXLEY
(ironic smile)
I tried to throw it all away and
they give it back in spades.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Exley walks Lynn out.

EXLEY
Where will you go?

LYNN
Bisbee, Arizona. The air's good
for pensioners and I know where
everything is.

EXLEY
When?

LYNN
Right now, before I back down.

EXLEY
Where is he?

Lynn gestures ahead. They walk to her car. She opens the back door. Bud's in the back. Braces on his legs, head sutured. Jaw wired shut and tubes running in and out. But his hands still look strong. Bud forces a smile through the wires, tries to say something, but can't.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
Thanks for the push.

Exley takes his hand. Bud squeezes till both men wince.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
You just did what you did. No
rank, no glory.

Exley slips his Medal of Valor into Bud's hand.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
From me to you. It'll mean
something if it's yours.

Bud takes it, turns away so Exley won't see the tears.

LYNN

We should go now.

As Exley steps back, Lynn closes the door. PARTY noises drift from upstairs. Exley looks to Lynn.

EXLEY

Do you think I ever could've been
in the running?

LYNN

Some men get the world. Others get
ex-hookers and a trip to Arizona.

A beat. Exley wishes he'd gotten the trip to Arizona. She kisses him on the cheek, gets in the CAR. STARTS it.

Exley looks back at Bud. Bud presses his hands to the glass. Exley touches his side, palms half the man's size. Hands against hands.

The car moves. A turn into traffic, a good-bye TOOT on the HORN. Exley's all alone. As he watches them go...

FADE TO BLACK.