

The Scent of a Rose

[Adapted from my novel]  
Cinéma Vérité

©2019 By Denis Mortenson

FADE IN

EXT. ALDEN WHITE'S HOUSE — FAIRFIELD — WINTER — DAWN

Snow blankets the 1930s bungalow house, trees, and ground.

CG: ROLL TITLE AND CAST

INT. ALDEN WHITE'S BEDROOM

ALDEN WHITE, age 42, dreams in a dark sleigh bed. Weak light, through pale curtains, illuminates clothes on the hardwood floor, dirty dishes stacked on a dresser, travel brochures on a table below the window. CLOSE IN on Alden. He is a big, handsome man, with brindle-colored hair, and short beard. He dreams.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. A CHURCH — WEDDING — SUMMER — DAY

View of Alden and a blonde bride from behind. A MINISTER stands in front of them. Alden lifts the bride's veil, revealing a dark void.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A BEACH — WINTER

ALDEN is alone, the wind blows shreds of the bride's dress away.

END DREAM SEQUENCE:

SFX: SOUND OF ALARM CLOCK RADIO

INT. ALDEN WHITE'S BEDROOM — DAWN

Alden wakes, shuts off the alarm, gets out of bed, and walks unsteadily to the bathroom.

INT. THE BATHROOM

Alden pees, washes face, combs hair. He appears haggard.

INT. THE BEDROOM

Alden in jeans and flannel shirt, ties shoelaces of his boots.

INT. THE KITCHEN

Alden packs metal lunch box. Drinks coffee, stares blankly.

EXT. THE BACK YARD

Alden in a heavy coat, clips a rose, puts it in his lunch box.

EXT. THE DRIVEWAY – MINUTES LATER

Alden scrapes ice off his truck's windshield.

INT. ALDEN'S PICKUP – FAIRFIELD – MORNING

Alden drives to work. The sun accentuates his sharp profile. Radio plays Vivaldi. Icy rain pummels windshield.

EXT. AN AERIAL VIEW OF FAIRFIELD – MORNING

Alden drives his pickup down a long, straight snow dusted street, bordered by bare trees, to his job at the GATEWAY MAIL PROCESSING FACILITY, a huge, gray warehouse. Mail trucks are parked at the loading dock, in the back of the building.

INT. ALDEN WHITE'S TRUCK – GATEWAY MAIL FACILITY

Alden drives up to the entrance gate, pushes an intercom button on the gate's panel. BERNIE, A SECURITY GUARD answers.

SECURITY GUARD (V.O.)  
Good morning, Alden.

ALDEN  
Good morning, Bernie.

There is a buzz; the gate opens. Alden parks his truck in the lot.

INT. GATEWAY MAIL PROCESSING FACILITY – AN HOUR LATER

The noise of mail processing machines fills the cavernous facility. Alden rolls a hamper of mail into the arms of a hydraulic lift, pushes a button, and the hamper is lifted and tipped. He jiggles a metal handle to dump a pile of letters onto a conveyor.

EXT. GATEWAY MAIL PROCESSING FACILITY – AN HOUR LATER

A tricked out 60s red Camaro pulls up by the entrance, and NORA ROSETTI, a beautiful twenty-something year old woman, dressed like a rock star, gets out. Magenta tips accent her dyed black hair; rings adorn her eyebrows, nose, and ears. Her lips are black as her Harley Davidson boots. She hesitates by the open door and the driver, RAMON, a twenty-something year old suave looking Hispanic man, leans across the passenger seat to speak to her.

RAMON

What time you want picked up, Nora?

NORA

Five minutes after five, right here. No overtime on my first frickin' day.

Ramon smiles. Nora shuts the door and Ramon drives off. Dead leaves toss in the air as the Camaro passes. Nora walks through an employee gate on the left side of the main entrance fence, then to a metal employee entrance door facing the parking lot.

INT. ORIENTATION ROOM – MINUTES LATER

Nora enters; the orientation has already begun. There are thirty new employees in the room. The INSTRUCTOR, who is passing out materials, glares at Nora as she walks to a chair and sits.

INT. A MAIL PROCESSING STATION

Alden watches the conveyor for fat parcels that will jam the BARNEY, a large purple colored processing machine connected to the conveyor. Alden is deep in thought, thinking of love letters.

INT. ORIENTATION ROOM

Nora and the other seasonal employees, in the darkened room, watch a film about mail processing. The footage shows an employee tossing a parcel about ten feet into a mail hamper. Close up of Nora smiling at the lunacy of the film.

INT. MAIL PROCESSING BUILDING BATHROOM – AN HOUR LATER

Nora comes from a stall and hands the pretty Hispanic female NURSE a urine sample, which is contained in a small glass vial.

NORA

Well, that was fun. Here you go.

NURSE

Thank you.

The nurse tests the urine at the sink. She glances at Nora's sexy outfit. Nora stands at a mirror, combs her hair, and puts on lipstick. The nurse glances at Nora.

NURSE (CONT'D)

You're very pretty.

Nora hesitates with the lipstick tube in her hand, and smiles.

NORA

Thanks. You're not so bad yourself.

NURSE

You look like you just came from a club.

NORA

Yeah, I did. But I think I can make it through the day. I drank enough coffee to keep me wired. I hope caffeine isn't on your checklist.

NURSE

Your sample is fine.

The nurse pours the urine sample in the toilet.

NORA

Whew, that's a relief. I'd flip out if I didn't get to work for Uncle Sam.

NURSE

My boyfriend would go crazy over you.

NORA

Yeah, men are all animals, right?

Nora blows the nurse a kiss and leaves the bathroom.

INT. HUMAN RESOURCES BUILDING WITHIN THE PROCESSING BUILDING

Nora sits facing LILY, a forty-something Chinese-American Human Resources Director. Nora slouches as Lily reads Nora's paperwork.

LILY

You're not dressed appropriately. Did you not read the handout about the USPS dress code?

NORA

Uh, no. . .sorry. I'll wear jeans tomorrow. I just got off work this morning.

Lily glares at Nora.

LILY

You didn't sleep?

NORA

A few hours. No worries, I'll be fine.

INT. BY A PROCESSING STATION — A SHORT TIME LATER

Lily and Nora pass a HAZ-MAT area. Two tired looking older women are processing blood and tissue sample packages. The ladies look up as Lily and Nora pass by them. Nora flashes a smile at them.

NORA  
Hey ladies. . .having fun?

The processing machines make a constant background noise. Lily and Nora stop at a thoroughfare by stacks of white plastic USPS bins. The gray floor is marked with yellow and red tape. Lily gestures to Alden White's area, about thirty feet away. Forklifts loaded with pallets and parcels continually pass in front of them.

LILY  
You'll be working with Alden White for several weeks. He's that big guy over there. He's worked every station in this plant.

Nora smiles as she sees that Alden is a handsome man.

NORA  
He must be a rocket scientist.

Lily's tight face shows she doesn't like Nora's humor.

LILY  
Go over there. He'll show you what to do.

Lily walks away. Nora crosses the thoroughfare in front of a forklift. The DRIVER comes to an abrupt stop. He ogles her.

DRIVER  
Hey — whuzz-up, baby?

Nora smiles at the driver and comes beside Alden as he jiggles a handle of a machine to dump mail on the conveyor belt.

NORA  
You're pretty good with that stick.

ALDEN  
Huh?

NORA  
I said you're GOOD with the STICK.

ALDEN  
Oh. . .thanks.

She offers a handshake, and he removes his gloves and obliges.

NORA

My name's Nora Rose; short for Rosetti.  
Lily said you'd show me what to do.

ALDEN

Oh, okay. My name is Alden White.  
Are you a casual hire?

NORA

Yeah, I'm here until the end of January.

Alden starts the conveyor. He leans next to Nora to speak to her.

ALDEN

You toss small parcels in the hampers. The  
bundles of metered mail go in the blue hamper.  
Larger parcels go in the white one. The rest  
goes through this big purple machine. Anything  
over a quarter inch thick will jam the machine.

Nora begins copying what Alden is doing. Their hands meet as they reach for a stack of letters, and they smile.

INT. MAIL FACILITY BREAK ROOM – CHRISTMAS EVE – AFTERNOON

Alden sits alone at a cafeteria table in the sterile room. Nora enters and pulls down the edge of the newspaper he's reading, to offer a small foil-wrapped package that has a bow attached.

NORA

Here's your Christmas present.

ALDEN

Oh, wow, thanks. What is it?

NORA

Homemade banana bread. Just for you.

ALDEN

You didn't have to get me a present.

NORA

I owe you for teaching me postal rules.

ALDEN

The main rule is to keep your head  
down and dodge the bullets.

NORA

See, you have a sense of humor. A lady out there on the floor said they spy on us from secret passageways.

ALDEN

They do; they're for inspectors.

NORA

Ooh, are they watching us now?

ALDEN

All the time.

NORA

Kinky. So, how long have you been here?

ALDEN

Twenty-years last month.

NORA

Oh my god. And you like it?

ALDEN

It's steady; the mail never stops.

NORA

Yeah. The utility companies want paid and people keep sending love letters. So. . .you ever been in love?

ALDEN

Me? No.

NORA

Lucky you. It leaves a scar in here.

Nora leans and touches Alden's chest with her index finger.

ALDEN

Oh, I suppose. . .and you?

NORA

A couple thousand times. I'm kidding.

ALDEN

So. . .why did you take this job?

NORA

It's okay money. Besides, I'm being evicted, the day after Christmas. Go figure.



ALDEN

I, uh, have an extra room. You could stay for free until you found something.

NORA

Really? Nice to meet a postal worker who isn't a psycho. I'll take you up on that.

She kisses his cheek, he is dazed by her affection.

EXT. ALDEN WHITE'S HOUSE – DECEMBER 30TH – NIGHT

Through the kitchen window show Nora by the stove making stir-fry. Her hair is up; she wears a black leotard top, jeans, and apron.

INT. ALDEN'S DINING ROOM

Nora comes from the kitchen with the stir-fry. Alden sits at the dining table and watches her undo her apron. He stares at her cleavage as she leans over the table. She smiles.

NORA

See anything you like, mister?

ALDEN

Sorry, I. . .you're very beautiful. I haven't had a woman over for a while.

NORA

Oh yeah? So, how long is it? Uh, I mean, how long has it been?

ALDEN

A few years. I had a party for Lily when she beat breast cancer.

NORA

I can relate. My mom died of breast cancer.

ALDEN

I'm sorry.

NORA

Don't be. She was lucky to get out before my dad killed her.

Alden scoops stir-fry onto Nora's plate and his own.

NORA (CONT'D)

Listen; I didn't mean to stay so long.

ALDEN

It's okay. I like having you here.

INT. ALDEN'S LIVINGROOM — NEW YEAR'S EVE — MORNING

Alden sits in a 1930s chair organizing his stamp collection. Nora comes from her bedroom wearing a short, pink robe. She stretches and her red panties show. He drops his tweezers; she picks it up and hands it to Alden. He is love-struck, and stares at her.

NORA

Good morning. What's all this?

ALDEN

Philately. Stamps; I collect stamps.

NORA

Hmm, you couldn't help yourself. . .

She sits in an adjacent chair and smiles at Alden in a sultry way.

NORA (CONT'D)

Hey, I was wondering if I could throw a little New Year's party?

ALDEN

You mean tonight? Who would you invite?

NORA

Some friends from the Beaver Bar.

ALDEN

What do you do there? Are you a hostess?

NORA

Yeah, a hostess with the most-tess.

She takes out a cigarette and a lighter from her robe.

NORA (CONT'D)

I used to pole dance, babe. Can I smoke?

He nods, looks confused. She lights her cigarette.

NORA (CONT'D)

You don't know what that is, do you?

ALDEN

I'm pretty sure, but I. . .

NORA  
It looks like this.

She rises and does a pole-dance using a broom. Alden is agog.

NORA (CONT'D)  
It's good money, but I'm tired of it.  
(beat)  
Oh my god, we're gonna need a tree if  
we're going to throw a party.

ALDEN  
I put away my tree after Christmas.

He opens a closet, takes down a foot-tall fake tree and sets it on the coffee table by his chair. He sits and opens his stamp book.

NORA  
God – a big ol' guy like you with a  
little bitty tree. It's hysterical.

She closes his stamp book and sets it on the coffee table.

NORA (CONT'D)  
C'mon, let's go get a real tree.

EXT. A U-CUT TREE LOT – MORNING

Nora and Alden are walking among the trees. Their breaths show in the morning air. Nora wears Alden's cardigan.

ALDEN  
Are you warm enough?

NORA  
Warm as toast. Hey, look at that tree!

Nora suddenly runs ahead and stops at a large conifer.

ALDEN  
It's way too big, Nora.

NORA  
No such thing as too big.

ALDEN  
It won't fit in my truck.

She opens the cardigan and reveals her bra and ample cleavage.

NORA  
 PRETTY PLEASE?

ALDEN  
 Nora? Okay, fine. . .get the tree.

EXT. THE PORCH OF ALDEN'S HOUSE – MORNING

Nora and Alden drag the tree partially through the open front door.

ALDEN  
 It's too wide. I'll have to trim it.

NORA (V.O.)  
 It'll fit. Just slide it in, babe.

The sound of a lamp breaking is heard as they get the tree inside.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM

The tree's top touches the ceiling. Alden looks annoyed.

NORA (CONT'D)  
 (laughs)  
 See, babe, it fits just fine.

INT. THE LIVING ROOM – AFTERNOON

They have decorated the tree.

NORA  
 It's gorgeous!

ALDEN  
 You're gorgeous.

She comes up to Alden and kisses him lightly on the lips.

NORA  
 Keep that up and you'll be licking more  
 than stamps. I'm gonna take a shower.

A HALF-AN-HOUR LATER BY A HALLWAY CLOSET

Alden grimaces while reaching for a small, wrapped present.

ALDEN  
 Ohh. . .

IN THE LIVINGROOM

Nora comes from the bathroom dressed in a robe; her hair is up in a towel. She stops when she sees Alden lying face down on the couch.

NORA

Oh my god. . .what did you do?

ALDEN

Just a cramp in my back. I'll be all right.

Alden hands Nora the wrapped gift, she opens it. CLOSE UP of a sparkling diamond necklace on black velvet.

NORA

Whoa. . .are these real diamonds?

She puts the necklace on, mounts his back, kisses his neck, and begins massaging his back. He is in ecstasy.

ALDEN

Yeah. Whoa; where'd you learn to do this?

NORA

I dated a masseuse. How'd you hurt your back, baby? I like your muscles.

ALDEN

Too many years at the post office.

She notices a stack of travel magazines on the coffee table.

NORA

What's with the travel magazines, babe?

ALDEN

I fantasize about traveling.

NORA

Just quit! We'll hop a plane tomorrow.

ALDEN

It's not that simple, Nora.

NORA

Why not? I'd do it in a heartbeat.

He sees the tattooed letters on her fingers that spell 'John.'

ALDEN

People depend on me. Uh, who was John?

NORA  
Someone I loved when I was nineteen.

ALDEN  
Nora, would you like to stay here?

NORA  
As what, your sex slave?

ALDEN  
No. I love you. I want to marry you.

She gets off and leans against a couch pillow. He turns over.

NORA  
Seriously? Look, if you want sex. . .

ALDEN  
I just want to take care of you.

NORA  
Nobody asked you to take care of me.  
I'm no Martha Stewart, sweetheart.  
You don't want to marry me, Alden.

ALDEN  
Yeah, I do.

NORA  
Do you habitually ask horny, homeless  
women to marry you?

ALDEN  
No. Actually, you're the first.

NORA  
Well, I've been asked a few times. I  
only wanted to marry one dude, but he  
never asked. Look, you're nice, but I'm  
not in love with you. You don't know me.

ALDEN  
I want to take care of you.

NORA  
I don't need a sugar daddy.

ALDEN  
I'm asking because I love you.

NORA

Man, you do have it bad. Well, we could have some laughs. It's your funeral. But I'm not marrying you in a church.

EXT. ALDEN'S BACKYARD GAZEBO — MORNING — TWO WEEKS LATER

Show a rose covered with ice. Hoar frost scatters as Alden and Nora cross the lawn to the gazebo, where Nora's barfly friends, Alden's postal comrades, and a MINISTER stand shivering. A keg of beer sits on the back porch. A CD plays a traditional wedding song.

Alden IMAGINES Nora in a white wedding dress. He blinks and sees she wears a black lacey dress, her body rings glittering in the light. She stares at him as if he is losing it.

MINISTER

And do you, Nora, take Alden to be your husband, to love and cherish, 'til death do you part?

NORA

Sure, why not? I do.

MINISTER

And do you, Alden, take Nora to be your lawfully wedded wife? To honor her, and cherish her in sickness and health, for richer or poorer, for better or worse?

ALDEN

I do.

The guests gather around Alden and Nora, chatting noisily. LILY WANG comes up to Nora and gives her a hug.

LILY

Hi, remember me from the plant?

NORA

Oh yeah. Thanks for coming.

LILY

Nora, we have an swing-shift opening on a mail sorter; if you're interested.

NORA

Yeah, well, I'll get back to you on that.

Lily hugs Alden.

LILY

Alden, I never thought you'd marry!  
You'd better hurry and have some kids!

Alden glances at Nora, and she shakes her head 'no.'

INT. ALDEN'S LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

The wedding guests are drunk and disorderly. A biker accidentally bumps a postal employee into the tree and ornaments fall off.

IN ALDEN'S BEDROOM

A barfly is making out with two postal employees on Alden's bed. Alden enters the room and turns away when he sees the trio.

IN THE HALLWAY

Alden meets a BIKER and Nora. The biker has his arm around Nora.

BIKER

Hey, dude! Mind if I kiss the bride?

The biker kisses Nora, and they laugh. Show the surreal scene in slow motion, from Alden's POV. He walks past the guests down a hall, up a flight of stairs to his spare bedroom. He enters and lies on the bed. From his POV, the overhead light appears to spin.

ALDEN'S LIVINGROOM – MORNING

Alden enters and sees Nora and the biker asleep on the couch.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF THE OREGON COAST – AFTERNOON

The blue curved rim of the ocean lies before us. We see Alden's truck traveling a straight stretch of road. "Just Married" is written in white letters on the back window.

INT. ALDEN'S TRUCK

Nora sips a beer. She is hungover, Alden appears serious.

ALDEN

That's not much of a breakfast.

NORA

Beer, the breakfast of champions.

ALDEN

It's three in the afternoon. (MORE)



She takes a swig of the beer and covers her eyes.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

Your friends broke an angel on the tree.

NORA

There are lots of broken angels out here.

ALDEN

I thought we'd sleep together last night.

NORA

Oh, that explains why you're so grouchy.  
Pull over and we'll do the deed, mister.

He pulls the truck off the road and glares at her.

NORA (CONT'D)

Sorry. My brain feels like mush. Keep  
driving. I'll try to be nice.

Alden pulls the truck onto the highway.

EXT. THE PACIFIC SHRINE MOTEL IN FLORENCE, OREGON – DUSK

Alden and Nora enter the 1940s era motel. Alden carries their bags.

NORA

Nice. This must be the Hilton, huh?

ALDEN

It's charming in a retro way.

NORA

Yeah, if you're into World War Two.

INT. THE MOTEL OFFICE

ORVAL OWENS and his wife, LESLIE, are inside. They're a retired couple. Leslie is in a wheelchair. The walls are decorated with circus posters. Nora, stares at the posters.

ORVAL

Good afternoon. May I help you?

ALDEN

I called earlier. I'm Alden White.

ORVAL

Yep, I got you two in the honeymoon suite.

NORA  
(to Orval)  
What's with the circus theme?

ORVAL  
We used to tour the country. Leslie was an aerialist, and I tended the elephants for Barnum & Bailey.

NORA  
(to herself)  
That explains the wheelchair.

INT. MO'S SEAFOOD RESTAURANT IN FLORENCE – DUSK

Alden and Nora sit at a table with a view of the port.

ALDEN  
Don't you want your chowder?

She slides the bowl of chowder across the table to him.

NORA  
Be my guest.

ALDEN  
See that trawler? I worked on one like it in Dutch Harbor, Alaska.

She finishes her beer and signals a WAITER who's passing by.

NORA  
Oh yeah? Sounds fun.  
(to the waiter)  
I'll have another beer.

The waiter nods and goes to fetch her a beer.

NORA (CONT'D)  
My mom's buried in Illinois. Dad's doing time in Lompoc for mailing a kilo of hash, which, apparently, pissed off the post office.

ALDEN  
My uncle did scrimshaw; he carved ivory.

The waiter comes with the beer. Nora takes a long drink. Alden watches her with a sullen expression.

NORA

Hmm, sounds like a riot, babe.

Nora takes a couple of long drinks from her beer.

ALDEN

That's your third beer, Nora.

NORA

Who are you, the beer police?

Nora finishes her beer and sets her glass on the table.

NORA (CONT'D)

Ugh! God, I don't feel so good.

She leans over the rail and throws up.

INT. ALDEN'S AND NORA'S HONEYMOON ROOM – NIGHT

Alden puts on a CD and climbs into bed next to Nora.

ALDEN

How's your stomach?

NORA

A lot better, thanks.

She moves closer to him and rubs her feet on his.

NORA (CONT'D)

Take your slippers off, babe.

ALDEN

I did.

NORA

What's wrong with your feet?

ALDEN

Too much standing is what the doctor said.

NORA

They're like sandpaper. It's gross.

(beat)

So, are we gonna do something or what?

ALDEN

I don't know; I'm a little uptight.

She climbs on top of him and pulls the sheet over them.

NORA  
Don't I turn you on?

ALDEN  
Yeah, sure. Probably too much.

She sighs, climbs off, and lies down again.

NORA  
Well, fine, I'm pretty tired anyway.  
The whole marriage thing just. . .

ALDEN  
What?

NORA  
It's gonna take some time to get used  
to the idea. I mean, it's not like I'm  
not grateful. I am. Goodnight.

She kisses him and turns off the bedside lamp.

EXT. A BEACH NEAR FLORENCE — DAY

Nora, wearing Alden's coat, sits on a beach log with a beer in her hand. Alden searches for agates in the gravel on the beach.

NORA  
Can we go home? I'm freezing my ass off.

Alden stands and puts agates in her open palms.

ALDEN  
Look what I found for you.

She looks at the agates and appears unimpressed.

NORA  
Are they worth anything?

ALDEN  
You could put them in a bracelet.

NORA  
Sounds like a lot of work.

ALDEN  
They're beautiful, just like you.

NORA

Yeah, well, thanks anyway. I'll stick with my diamond necklace. Here.

She puts the agates in his hand. Alden is dismayed.

INT. ALDEN'S HOUSE — A MONTH LATER — NIGHT

Alden comes home and finds a party going on. In the kitchen, CLARK is snorting cocaine. Nora is dancing in the living room.

NORA

Hey! Hi, honey! Get yourself a beer. There's chili and ribs in the kitchen.

ALDEN

Nora, a guy in the kitchen is snorting cocaine! I want him out!

IN THE KITCHEN

ALDEN (CONT'D)

(to Clark)

You are going to have to take this elsewhere.

Clark stands. He is as big as Alden and looks defiant.

CLARK

And who the hell are you, dude?

NORA

He's Alden, my husband. Remember him from the wedding, Clark?

CLARK

Oh yeah, no problem, Nora. Just havin' a little fun. Sorry, man.

Clark gathers his cocaine and leaves.

EXT. BY ALDEN'S FRONT PORCH — SUMMER

Alden weeds a flowerbed. Nora pulls up in Alden's truck and comes up the front porch steps carrying department store bags.

NORA

Could you grab the other bags, babe?

Alden dusts off his knees and gets Nora's bags from the truck.

INT. THE LIVINGROOM – MINUTES LATER

Nora sets her bags on the floor and lays on the sofa.

NORA

GOD! It was so hot today! I saw a black Corvette for sale in downtown. If you love me you would buy it for me.

ALDEN

A Corvette? I can't afford it. How did you buy all this stuff?

She holds up Alden's credit card and smiles.

NORA

I charged it, babe. No worries.

ALDEN

How much money did you spend?

NORA

Do I look like a CPA?

She puts her arms around his neck and kisses him.

NORA (CONT'D)

You want me to look nice, don't you?

ALDEN

You've been charging too much.  
You maxed out my Macy's card.

Nora opens her purse and takes out four credit cards.

NORA

YOUR Macy's card? Isn't anything mine?  
I mean, we are married, right? Fine, take  
your damn cards back then.

She hands the cards to Alden. He puts them back in her hand.

NORA (CONT'D)

I'm going out tonight. My ride will be  
here soon. There's leftovers in the fridge.

She goes down the hall with the bags. Alden watches her go.

INT. ALDEN'S BEDROOM – WINTER – EARLY MORNING

Alden awakes to the sound of laughter, and heavy breathing, coming from the upstairs bedroom. The clock displays 2AM.

EXT. AT THE DOOR OF THE UPSTAIRS BEDROOM

ALDEN

Nora?

The sounds stop. He tries the doorknob, but it's locked.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

Nora? Open the door!

Moments later Nora opens the door a crack and peers at Alden.

NORA

Oh, hi hon' - what's the problem?

Alden pushes past her. The bed sheets are in disarray. He looks out the open window and sees a man jogging down the wet street.

ALDEN

Was that guy in here?

NORA

What are you talking about?  
There's nobody in here but me.

Alden slides the window shut.

ALDEN

Why was the window open?

NORA

I like the sound of rain. Don't be  
so paranoid. Go back to bed.

INT. ALDEN'S HOUSE A FEW MONTHS LATER - AFTERNOON

Alden wanders through the house. Snow is visible through the windows. He goes into the bathroom and touches Nora's black nylons still hanging on the shower stall.

ALDEN

NORA? NORA?

INT. THE KITCHEN

Alden finds and reads a note from Nora by a stack of dirty dishes.

NORA (V.O.)  
Sorry it didn't work out. I tried.  
Goodbye, Nora.

INT. THE BEAVER BAR

Alden enters. Two young women are dancing on the stage to a rock beat. He goes to the bar and a black BARTENDER comes to serve him.

BARTENDER  
What'll you have?

ALDEN  
Nothing, thanks. Have you seen Nora?  
I mean, Nora Rosetti? She dances here.

BARTENDER  
Nora? Nah, I ain't seen her lately.  
Ask one of the girls; they might know.

Alden sits and a waitress comes to his table.

WAITRESS  
Hi sweetheart; what can I get you?

ALDEN  
I'm looking for Nora Rose, or Rosetti.

WAITRESS  
Yeah? She doesn't dance here anymore.

ALDEN  
Do you know where I can find her?

WAITRESS  
It depends. Are you a cop?

ALDEN  
No, I'm her husband.

WAITRESS  
Yeah? Try the Northwest Bush Country.

INT. THE NORTHWEST BUSH COUNTRY — A HALF AN HOUR LATER

Ramon sits with a burly man named CLARK. They see Alden enter.

RAMON  
Hey! Ain't that Nora's husband?



CLARK  
Yeah, Alden White Boy.

RAMON  
Why'd she marry a dude like him?

CLARK  
Maybe he's her sugar daddy.

Ramon pulls a cell phone from his leather vest and dials.

RAMON  
Nora? It's Ramon.

NORA (V.O.)  
Hi Ramon. Staying out of trouble?

RAMON  
I'm cool. Hey, your husband is here  
at the Northwest Bush Country.

NORA (V.O.)  
Did you talk to him?

RAMON  
No. Looks like he's leaving. Should  
I follow him?

EXT. THE NORTHWEST BUSH COUNTRY PARKING LOT — NIGHT

Alden gets in his truck.

NORA (V.O.)  
Nah, he's just lonely.

INT. ALDEN'S BEDROOM — NIGHT

Alden lies staring at a red lipstick stained cigarette butt.

INT. IN THE GATEWAY MAIL FACILITY SUPERVISORS' OFFICE — DAY

Lily is seated at her desk. Alden sits in front of her.

LILY  
You want to retire?

ALDEN  
I'm burned out, Lily. Nothing makes  
sense anymore. I need to leave.

LILY

Is this about your wife?

ALDEN

I'm sure you heard about it.

LILY

I should've asked how you were doing.  
You don't have to retire. Take a long  
vacation. Maybe you'll change your mind.

ALDEN

No. I need to try something else.

INT. THE GATEWAY MAIL FACILITY BREAK ROOM – AFTERNOON

A fisheye view of Alden's retirement party: cheap cake, a dozen employees drinking soda. BOB MAPLETON does a toast.

BOB MAPLETON

Here's to the best goddamn mail processor  
this plant has ever had.

EXT. A NEIGHBORHOOD IN FAIRFIELD – MORNING

Alden peruses garage sale items at a church. He glances at the rising sun backlighting the cross on the spire of the church.

ALDEN'S DRIVEWAY – AFTERNOON

Alden comes from his truck holding a faux Tiffany lamp. We can see a bookcase and a rocking chair in the bed of his truck.

ON ALDEN'S BACK PORCH

Alden sits on a porch swing, looking at his wedding photos.

EXT. A NEIGHBORHOOD IN FAIRFIELD – MORNING

Alden stops his truck at a cardboard sign that reads: ESTATE SALE – LOTS OF AMBER AND AGATES. He parks his truck as an old WIDOW in a red flannel bathrobe comes from the garage carrying a large box.

ALDEN

Let me help you.

WIDOW

Oh, thanks.

INT. THE WIDOW'S GARAGE

Alden has found a rock tumbler, agates, and amber.

ALDEN  
How much for these?

WIDOW  
How about eight bucks? I found  
the amber on a beach in Denmark.  
Ever been there?

ALDEN  
No. I'd like to go sometime.

Alden goes to a dusty metallic case that sits on a shelf.

ALDEN (CONT'D)  
What's in the case?

WIDOW  
An old film type camera.

Alden opens it and it contains a 16mm motion picture camera.

WIDOW (CONT'D)  
It was my son's. He used to be a  
film student at UCLA.

ALDEN  
Doesn't he want it?

WIDOW  
He and my husband died in a plane crash.

ALDEN  
Oh. I'm sorry.

She takes a box from a cabinet and removes two blank film reels.

WIDOW  
Yeah, well, I'm moving to Florida.

ALDEN  
How much for this camera?

WIDOW  
How about two-hundred bucks?

INT. ALDEN'S KITCHEN - DAY

Alden tries to figure out how to load the film in the camera.

## ALDEN'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alden has fallen asleep in a chair. Flashes of light from the TV screen illuminate his profile. The film, 'Vertigo' is playing.

SCOTTY (JIMMY STEWART) (V.O.)  
This was as far as I could get but you  
went on. . .remember? The necklace, Madilyn.  
That was the slip. I remembered the necklace.

JUDY (KIM NOVAK) (V.O.)  
Let me go. . . .

SCOTTY (JIMMY STEWART) (V.O.)  
Now we're going up in the tower Madilyn.

JUDY (KIM NOVAK) (V.O.)  
You can't; you're afraid.

SCOTTY (JIMMY STEWART) (V.O.)  
We'll see. . .we'll see. This is my  
second chance!

JUDY (KIM NOVAK) (V.O.)  
Scotty, PLEASE!

## EXT. ALDEN'S BACKYARD - DAY

Alden films a butterfly, and a cat stalking a squirrel.

## ALDEN'S NEIGHBORHOOD

Alden films boys shooting basketball, and a mailman delivering letters. He bumps his forehead on a tree branch, while filming sparrows doing a courtship dance. With a bandage on his head, he films a LITTLE GIRL drawing on a sidewalk with a piece of chalk.

LITTLE GIRL  
There was an old woman who swallowed a fly. . .

## EXT. DOWNTOWN FAIRFIELD - DUSK

A heavy rain is falling. Alden is driving his truck in traffic.

## INT. ALDEN'S TRUCK

Alden sees Nora entering a taxi. He follows it to a Spanish-style apartment building. Nora, with umbrella in hand, gets out and enters the building. Alden parks, walks to the entrance, but it's locked. He doesn't see Nora's name listed, and he steps back into the rain. He sees a similar building across the street and crosses to it.

INT. THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS HOTEL — DUSK

The interior is decorated in the Spanish Mission style. To the right is the concierge's counter. An older woman, MARGIE, is looking in a phonebook. Reading glasses sit on the end of her nose, her nametag is on her blouse. J.J., (JAMES COTNER), her black assistant, is behind her with a phone tucked under his chin.

MARGIE

May I help you?

ALDEN

Yes, I need a room for tonight.

MARGIE

We have a room with a king bed. Rents for \$75 a night, on the fourth floor. Or you can rent it by the month for \$800.

ALDEN

Just one night for now.

He fills in the register and places the money on the counter. She counts the money and hands him the key.

MARGIE

Room 447. You can smoke in your room if you like, but no pot. You got baggage? J.J. can help you to carry it or whatnot.

ALDEN

I only have this case. Where do I park?

MARGIE

Around back. There's nothin' sacred back there.

INT. ALDEN'S ROOM — DUSK

Alden frames the windows of Nora's apartment building with his camera lens. He lies on the bed and falls asleep.

INT. ALDEN'S ROOM — NIGHT

Alden wakes and looks out the window. The Cascadia Terrace red neon sign glows in the darkness. Directly across from his room a man and woman are engaged in an animated discussion. He turns his camera on, zooms in, and sees that the woman is Nora.

The man, TONY FUCINATO, gestures wildly. Nora listens, her arms crossed over her chest. She strokes Tony's shoulder, they kiss, and

disappear from view. Alden moves away from the camera, and slumps into the nearby Mission-style chair. He sleeps and dreams.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

Alden, in a postal uniform, falls onto the spider's web. Suddenly a spider lunges and it has Nora's face. Alden closes his eyes and suddenly he's on his old mail route. He opens his mailbag and sees Nora and the Italian kissing. He stuffs them into a mailbox and puts the flag up. The red flag morphs into a rose.

END DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. ALDEN'S ROOM — MORNING

Alden films Nora standing at her window, and when a black Mercedes down on the street attracts her attention, he films a slender sophisticated blonde, CLAIRE FUCINATO, and Tony coming from the car. They enter Nora's building. A few minutes later Alden films the threesome arguing inside Nora's room.

ALDEN

(to himself)

The cookie's crumbling, Nora.

Alden films Tony and Claire walk to their car, and then pans up to Nora's window. He films a close-up of Nora by the window.

INT. A FLOWER SHOP — DAY

Alden looks excited. The FLORIST comes to assist him.

ALDEN

How much for all the orchids in this case?  
The roses and the orchids, and those lilies?

FLORIST

Several hundred dollars. I'd have  
to add it up. You want ALL OF THEM, sir?

ALDEN

Every last one! Thank you!

INT. ALDEN'S HOUSE — LIVING ROOM — DAY

Vases of flowers fill the house. Alden smiles blissfully.

INT. ALDEN'S ROOM IN THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS — DAY

A steady rain pelts the window. Alden films Nora in her apartment. She stretches and looks towards him. He jerks away and then realizes

she hasn't seen him. There is a knock on the door and he opens it. Two young women, JANNA SPARKS and TARA STERLING, are standing there, dressed in short tops that expose their bellies.

JANNA

Hi, we're your neighbors from down the hall. I'm Janna, and this is Tara.

ALDEN

Alden White. Pleased to meet you.

TARA

We saw you bring a camera case from the elevator a couple of days ago.

ALDEN

Yeah, I make little films. It's a hobby.

JANNA

Oh, how cool!

They enter and go to the camera. Tara looks through the lens.

TARA

Are you filming that apartment?

ALDEN

Um, no, I was, uh, filming the swallows. They swoop down from the roof. They're very acrobatic.

TARA

Really? So what are you on assignment from National Geographic or something?

ALDEN

No, I'm an amateur filmmaker.

JANNA

Cool; Tara and I have a band. Would you be interested in doing a music video for us?

ALDEN

I suppose I could. Sure.

JANNA

Awesome! Give me your phone number. (MORE)

He writes his number on a card and hands it to her.

JANNA (CONT'D)

So you're going to be here awhile?

ALDEN

I actually haven't decided yet.

Janna and Tara walk to the door and Alden follows them.

JANNA

Yeah, it's a dump. Hey, we were going out. Do you want to come?

ALDEN

Sorry, maybe next time. I'm filming.

TARA

Oh yeah, those birds. Have fun.

They exit. Alden shuts the door and peeks out the window lace. From his POV we see Nora by her window with a towel wrapped around her hair. A few minutes later she's dressed. He turns the camera off.

INT. THE STAIRWAY — DAY

Alden races down the stairs; his shirt is untucked.

EXT. AN ALLEY BY THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS HOTEL

Nora is walking; Alden waits in his truck. There is a break in the rain. She wears a long black coat over a short leather skirt. When she's close he gets out of the truck and crosses in front of her towards a newspaper stand.

ALDEN

Hey, Nora!

NORA

Oh. . .hello Alden.

She stops and then approaches him.

NORA (CONT'D)

What are you doing here?

ALDEN

I was just going to yard sales.

NORA

On a Tuesday? That's friggin' unusual. You've been following me, haven't you?



ALDEN

No, I was just driving around.

NORA

I heard you looked for me at a club.  
I'll bet you know where I live.

ALDEN

I found you by accident, Nora.

NORA

Yeah, I'll bet. Liar.

ALDEN

I love you, Nora. I could forgive you. . .

NORA

(laughs)

Forgive me? I don't need your forgiveness.  
I'm dead to you, Alden. It's over.

ALDEN

Nora, listen, it doesn't have to be. .

NORA

But it is. I'm not into rocks, stamps,  
or whatever. I don't mean to be cruel. So  
don't follow me around. It's weird.

She smooths his lapel. He stares at her, and she winks.

NORA (CONT'D)

I'll arrange for the divorce paperwork.  
You'll get it in the mail.

She leaves and the click of her high heels grow faint.

INT. ALDEN'S TRUCK

Alden gets in his truck, starts the engine, and peels rubber. From his POV, via the rearview mirror, he sees Nora walking away.

INT. ALDEN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vases of flowers fill the room. Alden takes a walking stick from a closet and smashes them. Water, glass, and flowers fly. When they're all broken, he breaks the stick on his knee and collapses. He sits with his back to a wall and tears roll down his cheeks.

EXT. THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS HOTEL - DUSK

Alden pulls his truck into the hotel parking lot.

INT. ALDEN'S ROOM AT THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS — NIGHT

View of Alden sleeping in his bed. He's dreaming.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

EXT. A DESERT CANYON — DAY

Alden walks into the canyon and passes postal workers. He crosses a shallow river and finds a red crystal. The crystal morphs into a red rose and the petals break apart to reveal Nora's face.

END DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. ALDEN'S ROOM AT THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS — NIGHT

Alden wakes and sits up in bed.

ALDEN

NORA?

He goes to the camera and views Tony slapping Nora. She falls on the floor, out of view. He slides the window open and leans out.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

DON'T YOU TOUCH HER! I'LL KILL YOU!

INT. NORA'S ROOM AT THE CASCADIA TERRACE APARTMENTS

Tony hears Alden and opens their street side window.

TONY

Who is this clown?

Nora gets up and looks out the window. She rubs her cheek.

NORA

My husband.

ALDEN

NORA! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? I LOVE YOU!  
COME HOME WITH ME! I LOVE YOU, NORA!

NORA

GO HOME, ALDEN! STAY OUT OF THIS!

Tony shuts the window and pulls the curtains closed.

INT. ALDEN'S ROOM — NIGHT

Alden runs from the room with his shirt halfway on.

THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS LOBBY

Margie is watching TV and looks up when Alden runs past.

MARGIE  
HEY! WHAT'S GOING ON?

EXT. ON THE SIDEWALK BY THE CASCADIA TERRACE APARTMENTS

Alden pounds his fist on the locked front door.

ALDEN  
NORA! OPEN THE DOOR! NORA!

Lights come on in the building.

ALDEN (CONT'D)  
NORA! OPEN THE DOOR!

A WOMAN in Nora's building leans her head out of her window.

WOMAN  
SHUT UP DOWN THERE! WE'RE SLEEPING!

Tony comes out the front door of Nora's building and pushes Alden.

TONY  
WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, DUDE? Nora don't  
want to see you; SO BEAT IT!

Alden takes a swing at Tony, but Tony ducks and hits him several times. Alden falls on his back and wipes the blood from his lip.

TONY (CONT'D)  
STAY AWAY FROM NORA! YOU GOT IT? OR  
THE NEXT TIME I'LL KILL YOU!

Alden nods. He gets up slowly, unsteady on his feet. Nora comes from the building, pushes past Tony, and stands by Alden.

NORA  
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO HIT HIM, TONY!  
(MORE)

She reaches to touch Alden's face, but he steps back and walks toward his hotel. Nora and Tony watch him.

NORA (CONT'D)  
 I TOLD YOU NOT TO FOLLOW ME, DIDN'T I?  
 I TOLD YOU!

Nora pushes pass Tony, and enters the Cascadia Terrace Apartments.

TONY  
 WHAT? He started it. NORA?  
 What do you want me to say? HEY,  
 COME HERE! I SAID I WAS SORRY!

NORA  
 Then I'll have to blame your fists  
 for being drunk and disorderly.

TONY  
 WHAT? HEY! C'mon. . .NORA!

He follows her into the apartment house.

Margie stands at the entrance to the Conquistador Arms. Alden walks past her without saying anything, and she follows him.

INT. THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS LOBBY – NIGHT

Alden, stoic and still unsteady, walks towards the elevator.

MARGIE  
 Should I call an ambulance? HEY,  
 WE DON'T LIKE TROUBLE HERE!

INT. ALDEN'S APARTMENT – TEN MINUTES LATER

Alden is in the bathroom splashing water on his face. He dabs his swollen cheekbone with a wet washcloth.

INT. BY THE CONCIERGE – MORNING

Alden lays his room key on the counter. Margie is surprised and picks it up. Alden carries his suitcase and camera case.

MARGIE  
 You're leaving 'cause of that tramp?  
 She's not worth the trouble.

Alden pauses at the entrance and scowls at Margie.

ALDEN  
 She's no tramp. She's my wife.

INT. ALDEN'S HOUSE — DAY

Alden wraps his pistol with bubble wrap and puts it in box.

INT. A POSTOFFICE — DAY

POSTAL CLERK

Next, please.

Alden hands a clerk the cardboard box, and the clerk weighs it.

POSTAL CLERK (CONT'D)

And how do you want to send this?

ALDEN

First class.

POSTAL CLERK

Heavy for such a little box.

ALDEN

They're dark chocolates.

POSTAL CLERK

Must be cream filled, huh?

ALDEN

Yeah. They're loaded all right.

EXT. ALDEN'S HOUSE — DAY

Show Alden power washing his driveway, raking leaves, and sprinkling moss removal powder on his roof.

INT. ALDEN'S HOUSE — NIGHT

Alden sits in his blue chair eating a sandwich. The phone rings.

ALDEN

Hello?

JANNA (V.O.)

Hey, Alden! This is Janna. Do you still want to film our music video?

ALDEN

Sure, why not.

JANNA (V.O.)

We heard about the fight. Are you okay?

ALDEN

Yeah, don't worry about it.

EXT. SATURDAY MARKET DOWNTOWN FAIRFIELD — AFTERNOON

The market is an open-air collection of booths filled with local hippies, craftspeople, food booths, and entertainers. Alden films the girls as they mingle in the crowd with their guitars.

A DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Alden sits in the center of a merry-go-round and films the girls.

INT. JANNA AND TARA'S ROOM AT THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS — NIGHT

Janna and Tara are on the bed. Alden films them from a ladder.

JANNA

I think we've got enough to work with.

TARA

Cool. Hey, Alden pass that whiskey.

Alden hands her a thermos and she takes a swig.

TARA (CONT'D)

I guess you'll want us naked now.

ALDEN

No thanks. You two go to sleep.

JANNA

It's porn if you film us when we're drunk.

ALDEN

It's art.

TARA

It's porn and you know it. Perve.

JANNA

We're good girls, so don't try to take advantage of us. Not tonight anyway.

ALDEN

That's not my style, Janna.

JANNA

That's what bothers us. Goodnight.

The girls fall asleep. Alden films them, fascinated by their angelic faces. He sets the camera on the tripod and frames Nora's apartment window, gets in the bed, and falls asleep. Show the camera on the tripod. Its power light is on. Nora appears in her window with Alden's gun, holds against her cheek, and smiles.

EXT. THE STREET BY NORA'S APARTMENT BUILDING – NIGHT

Tony drives up in the Mercedes and goes to Nora's building.

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT – NIGHT

Nora and Tony lay in the bed. Nora smokes a cigarette.

NORA

How long have we've seen each other?

TONY

Mmm, nine months, maybe? I forget.

Nora goes to the window and slides her fingers down the glass.

NORA

I remember you were going to get a divorce.

Tony gets out of bed and wraps his arms around her from the back.

TONY

Nora, baby, Claire's father died; she's fragile right now. I need more time.

NORA

That's what you said six months ago.

TONY

Hey, what's this all about?

NORA

I have a way for us to be together now.

TONY

What do you mean?

Nora goes to a dresser and returns to the bed with Alden's pistol.

TONY (CONT'D)

What's that?

NORA

Don't get excited; it's not a sex toy. It's Alden's gun. He mailed it to me.

TONY  
Why did he do that?

NORA  
He thought I needed protection.

TONY  
From me?

She points it at him and he glares at her.

TONY (CONT'D)  
Put the gun down, Nora; it's not funny.

She lowers the gun.

NORA  
You haven't heard the punch line yet.

TONY  
Does it have to do with killing someone?

NORA  
Yeah, and Alden's going to do it.

TONY  
I don't follow you.

NORA  
It's a no-brainer. We kill Claire  
and make sure Alden's prints are on  
the gun. It's the perfect crime.

Tony begins getting dressed. She comes and stands by him.

TONY  
There's no such thing. Besides, your  
husband would kill me, not my wife.

He stands and buttons his shirt.

NORA  
That's the beauty of it. All we have to  
do is make it look like he was going for  
you and she got shot. You knock him out  
and tie him up for the cops to find.  
(beat)  
You collect the insurance money, we meet  
in Mexico, and live happily ever after.



TONY

There were a dozen witnesses to me beating up your husband. It wouldn't take a rocket scientist to piece it together.

She points the gun at him again.

TONY (CONT'D)

You're making me nervous, Nora.

NORA

You always wanted to be an actor; here's your chance.

TONY

I'm not up for the audition.

She pushes him back on the bed and he doesn't resist.

NORA

Sometimes to get what you want you have to take shortcuts. Besides, you don't have to kill anyone. I'll do it. I'll be glad to kill your bitchy wife. Millions can clear your conscience.

She unbuttons his shirt.

TONY

Right, but the caveat is that crime doesn't pay, and I don't think. . .

She puts her finger on his lips.

NORA

Shh, shh. Think about it. We'll talk about the caveats later.

She kisses him.

INT. JANNA AND TARA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Alden wakes and sees the girls are asleep. He turns the camera off, writes a note to them, and leaves the apartment.

EXT. ALDEN'S HOUSE - EARLY AFTERNOON

Alden has a camper on his truck. He's loading his gear when the phone rings inside the house. He goes in his house to answer it.

INT. ALDEN'S LIVING ROOM

ALDEN

Hello?

NORA (V.O.)

Alden? This is Nora. Can I come over?

Alden plops down in his blue chair. He cannot resist her.

NORA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Alden? Are you there?

ALDEN

Yeah, I'm here.

NORA (V.O.)

I'm sorry for what happened, Alden.  
Tony's a hothead. How's your eye?

ALDEN

It's fine, if you like black and blue.

NORA (V.O.)

Why did you have to follow me?  
I told you not to, didn't I?

He lies back in the chair and closes his eyes.

NORA (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Alden? Are you still there?

ALDEN

I'm still here.

NORA (V.O.)

Can I come over? I baked you a tuna  
noodle casserole.

ALDEN

What?

NORA (V.O.)

I baked you a casserole. Have  
you eaten lunch?

ALDEN

Why do you want to come over, Nora?

NORA (V.O.)

To bring you a peace offering.

ALDEN

You're right, it's too late for us.

NORA (V.O.)

You don't mean that. Let me come over.  
Alden? Are you still there?

ALDEN

Yeah, okay. You can come.

EXT. FRONT PORCH OF ALDEN'S HOUSE — EARLY AFTERNOON

Nora pulls in the driveway in a Lexus and comes to the front porch with the casserole. She wears a red dress with a plunging neckline.

NORA

Hey, handsome! Are you hungry?

ALDEN

Sure.

He holds the door open for her. She kisses his cheek.

INT. ALDEN'S DINING ROOM — A SHORT TIME LATER

Nora and Alden sit at the dining table and eat.

NORA

Sorry about what I said on the street.  
I was overwhelmed. I didn't mean it.

ALDEN

Overwhelmed? In what way?

NORA

I'm in way over my head with Tony.

ALDEN

If he beats you, why stay with him?

NORA

I want to break up with him but I  
need your help.

ALDEN

I sent a gun. Won't that do it?

NORA

Can you go with me to talk to him?

ALDEN

Sorry, I've had enough black eyes.

She notices him staring at her wedding ring.

NORA

I never took it off. Being away has taught me I had it pretty good with you.

ALDEN

Yeah, I'm still paying off credit cards.

NORA

You don't have to forgive me.

ALDEN

You're confusing me Nora.

She comes around the table and takes his hand.

NORA

C'mere. C'mere, baby.

ALDEN

What? What are you doing?

She leads him down the hall to the bedroom. He is smiling.

NORA

I think you know.

INT. ALDEN'S BEDROOM

Nora leads him to end of the bed. She pats it and he sits down.

ALDEN

Nora, this isn't going to fix things.

She kisses his neck.

NORA

Shh. . .I'm un-confusing you.

She kisses his forehead.

NORA (CONT'D)

Does it hurt?

ALDEN

I've had worse; plenty worse. . .(MORE)

She kisses around his black eye, and on his lips.

ALDEN (CONT'D)  
. . .this is the absolute worse.

She takes his pants off, stands in front of him, and undresses.

NORA  
I'm a bad girl; you should spank me.

THE BED — TWO HOURS LATER — DUSK

We are looking down on Alden and Nora wrapped in the sheets.

NORA (CONT'D)  
That was pretty good.

ALDEN  
Yeah.

NORA  
So, could you talk to Tony for me?

ALDEN  
The divorce papers came yesterday.

She rolls on her side and faces him.

NORA  
I've got mine in my purse. Let's  
burn our copies.

BY THE FIREPLACE — NIGHT

Nora and Alden are wearing robes and seated on the fireplace hearth. Their divorce papers lay on a small stack of kindling in the fireplace. Nora strikes a match and lights them.

ALDEN  
Do you still have my pistol?

She takes the pistol from her purse and stares at it.

NORA  
Can I put it away? Guns make me nervous.

ALDEN  
Sure. Put it in the top drawer of my dresser.

THE BEDROOM

Nora opens and shuts a drawer. She puts the pistol in her purse.

BY THE FIREPLACE

Nora comes and sits by Alden. She hands him a note.

NORA

We'll meet Tony tomorrow night. Here are the directions. Be there at eight.

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT - THREE HOURS LATER - NIGHT

Nora wears a sexy negligee in bed. She is on the phone with Tony.

TONY (V.O.)

I've been thinking about your idea.

NORA

Yeah?

TONY (V.O.)

I can't be a part of it.

NORA

Damn it Tony. . .so this is goodbye?

TONY (V.O.)

No, it's a temporary separation.

NORA

It sounds like goodbye to me.

TONY (V.O.)

You know I love you, right?

NORA

I'm getting less sure by the minute. What about that loan to get a house?

TONY (V.O.)

Claire found out I was cashing stocks.

NORA

Tony, you promised me that money.

TONY (V.O.)

Just give me some more time, baby.

NORA

Next you'll want me as your organ donor. donor. Sorry, I'm fresh out of balls.

TONY (V.O.)  
C'mon, Nora. I'll call you, okay? Nora?

NORA  
Yeah, right. Goodnight.

She hangs up the phone; her face is sullen and determined.

EXT. THE FOLLOWING DAY ON A STREET BY TONY'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Tony's house is a mansion. Alden walks to the door and rings the doorbell, but there's no answer. Suddenly the door swings open, and Nora grabs his arm and pulls him inside.

ALDEN  
Nora? I. . .

INT. THE FOYER OF TONY'S HOUSE

The interior of the house is refined and reeks of wealth.

NORA  
Quiet! Get in here!

ALDEN  
You almost gave me a heart attack!

NORA  
What are you doing here?

ALDEN  
You said to. . .

NORA  
Why did you come back?

ALDEN  
I just got here. What do you mean?

NORA  
Don't play dumb – I found them!

ALDEN  
Who?

Nora, wearing thin gloves, pulls Alden by his sleeve down a hall.

THE FUCINATO'S LIBRARY

She flips on the light and points to Tony and Claire on the floor.

NORA

They're where you left them, sweetheart.

ALDEN

MY GOD! WHAT HAPPENED?

He kneels by Claire and feels her pulse. He looks up at Nora.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

She's still alive. Call an ambulance!

NORA

It's a little late for that. Especially with your gun lying on the floor.

ALDEN

My gun? But I left it at home.

He picks up the pistol and puts it in his pocket.

NORA

You should be more careful where you leave the murder weapon.

ALDEN

You think I did this?

NORA

It's not what I think. It's what the cops will think. Have a seat; you look like you need a drink.

She goes to cabinet and pours a glass of bourbon. She puts white powder into the drink and mixes it in. She hands it to him.

ALDEN

We should call the cops. We should get out of here. We've gotta go, Nora.

NORA

Only guilty people run, darling.

He takes several drinks. She sits in a nearby chair.

NORA (CONT'D)

I never pictured you as a murderer. I guess you can't judge a book by its cover.

ALDEN

What? I've never been here! (MORE)



ALDEN (CONT'D)

We have to get that lady to a hospital or she'll die! You know I didn't do this!

NORA

I don't know anything except two people are dead. If my math is right, it adds up to you.

Nora comes and sits by him. She runs her fingers through his hair. He lies back and appears dazed.

NORA (CONT'D)

You look tired, babe. You should rest.

Alden looks at the glass in his hand. He sets it down on the coffee table, takes out his handkerchief, and wipes it off. From Alden's POV the glass goes in and out of focus.

NORA (CONT'D)

I wouldn't worry about the glass; your prints are on everything. You could be wiping things all night.

ALDEN

I'm dizzy. What was in that drink?

He tries to stand but she guides him to a couch, and he lies down.

NORA

Just bourbon. Try to relax.

From Alden's POV the coffee table moves in slow circles. Nora dials the police and SERGEANT WILLIAMS answers.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS (V.O.)

Fairfield police, Sergeant Williams speaking.

Alden sits up but collapses onto the couch again.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Hello? Is someone there?

NORA

Yes, this is Claire Fucinato. I live at 2841 Charnelton Street.

Nora takes the pistol from Alden's coat pocket. From Alden's POV she is blurry, and then he passes out.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS (V.O.)

How may I help you ma'am?

NORA

I was upstairs packing for the airport.  
I heard my husband arguing with someone  
downstairs, and then I heard a gunshot.

SERGEANT WILLIAMS (V.O.)

Are you upstairs now, ma'am?

NORA

I'm downstairs in the library. There's  
blood on the floor. Jesus. . . .

SERGEANT WILLIAMS (V.O.)

You need to get out of the house, ma'am.

NORA

I hear someone. There's a man. . .

SERGEANT WILLIAMS (V.O.)

Ma'am, for your safety, get out of the house.

NORA

Please. . .NO. . .PLEASE DON'T!

SERGEANT WILLIAMS (V.O.)

MA'AM? MA'AM?

She aims at Claire's stomach and fires. She hangs up the phone.

NORA

(to Alden)

Sleep well, the cops are on their way.

Nora wipes the phone receiver and puts the gun in Alden's hand. She leaves the house. Moments pass. Alden rolls off the couch, drops the gun, and staggers out the front door. Camera frames the gun.

EXT. THE STREET - NIGHT

Alden comes from the house and walks unsteadily to his truck.

INT. ALDEN'S TRUCK

Alden struggles to get the key in the ignition, starts the engine, and pulls the truck around. He scrapes the right fender on the retaining wall of the neighbor's yard. Lights come on in their house. From Alden's POV the lines in the road are doubled.

Alden's face is illuminated from the dash of the truck.

ALDEN (V.O.)  
 My prints are everywhere. . .but,  
 they don't have a murder weapon.

He feels his coat pockets but the pistol is not there.

ALDEN (V.O.) (CONT'D)  
 As long as I have it then they. . .  
 . . .where is it? Maybe it fell out in  
 the street. They'll trace it to me.  
 Nora must have drugged me.

EXT. A ROAD IN A NATIONAL FOREST

Alden's truck pulls off the main road onto a logging road. POV  
 through the front windshield. Alden slumps over the steering wheel.

INT. THE TRUCK'S CAMPER A HALF HOUR LATER

Alden lies on his cot inside the camper and DREAMS.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

THE FUCINATO'S LIBRARY — NIGHT

Alden films Claire lying dead on the floor. She opens her eyes.

CLAIRE  
 How's the filming going?

ALDEN  
 Fine.

CLAIRE  
 It's okay. You didn't kill us.

ALDEN  
 I know.

END DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. THE TRUCK CAMPER — MIDNIGHT

INTERCUTS of Alden shaving, putting tissue on nicks.

EXT. AN ALLEY BY ALDEN'S HOUSE — THE NEXT MORNING — DAWN

Alden walks down the alley and scales his fence, while a neighbor's  
 dog barks at him. Alden carries the camera case, and loses his  
 balance, landing on his butt in his back yard.

ALDEN

Shh, Goldie. Shh, it's Alden.

INT. ALDEN'S HOUSE

Alden goes to the front window, sees the screen door is ajar and picks up a FedEx package that lies wedged between the door and screen. He dials Janna and Tara number on his cordless phone. Out the front window he notices a late model dark blue car has parked near his house. He can see two men in the car, dressed in conservative suits. He hangs up the phone. He backs up against a wall, and then exits out the back door.

INT. THE DETECTIVES' CAR

DETECTIVE HARRISON, a fifty-something white man, and DETECTIVE JACKSON, his thirty-something black partner, watch Alden's house. Harrison taps a cigarette from his pack and puts it in his mouth.

JACKSON

I thought you quit.

HARRISON

Every week.

JACKSON

Think he's in there?

HARRISON

If you just killed someone would you be hanging around your house?

JACKSON

Never know about postal workers. He might have a whole arsenal in there.

HARRISON

It's not like he's a member of ISIS.

JACKSON

Yeah. I suppose. So when do we move in?

HARRISON

When the SWAT squad gets in position.

JACKSON

They're parking in the alley?

HARRISON

That's the idea; but they're late.

EXT. THE ALLEY

Alden sees a patrol car by his truck. He turns and jogs back up the alley, crosses several streets, and enters a shopping mall.

INT. A CLOTHING STORE AT A MALL – MORNING

Alden is trying on hats when he sees J.J., and approaches him.

ALDEN

Hey J.J. – how are you doing?

J.J.

Uh, hey. . .HEY – ALDEN? How you doin', man? You look different without the. . .

ALDEN

Yeah, I know. Say, could you give me a ride? My truck broke down.

J.J.

Huh? Oh, yeah, sure, no problem.

EXT. THE PARKING LOT

They get in J.J.'s van and pass a patrol car that's just arrived. Alden bends to avoid being seen, but J.J. doesn't notice his action.

INT. THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS HOTEL ELEVATOR

J.J.

If you're seeing the girls I'll tag along.

ALDEN

All right.

INT. JANNA AND TARA'S APARTMENT – NOON

Janna opens the door. She does a double take at Alden.

JANNA

Oh my god, Alden – you shaved! Come in!

Alden and J.J. enter.

Janna goes to the bathroom door and knocks.

JANNA

Tara! Get your butt out of the shower. Alden and J.J. are here!

Tara opens the bathroom door and pokes her head out.

TARA

Wow, Alden, you look so young without the beard. Geez, you guys are up early!

J.J.

Yeah, if noon is early.

TARA

I'll be out in a second.

She closes the door. Janna, J.J. and Alden sit down on a couch and Mission chair. Alden hands Janna the FedEx box.

ALDEN

Here is the video we shot. Take it to a TV station and have them make a copy.

JANNA

Awesome. So what's going on?

ALDEN

You wouldn't believe me if I told you.

Alden is upset. He goes to the window. Janna comes beside him.

JANNA

Alden? What's the matter?

ALDEN

My pollen allergies are bothering me.

J.J.

Don't seem like pollen to me, bro.

Tara comes from the bathroom, smiling until she sees them.

TARA

Geez, who died?

JANNA

Alden was telling us something.

ALDEN

That fight a couple of weeks ago was about my wife, Nora.

JANNA

Yeah, we heard about it.

ALDEN

I stayed here to get her back. After the fight I went home. Then Nora phoned me.

TARA

I hope you told her where to go.

ALDEN

She said she wanted to leave her boyfriend. When I got to his house, they were dead.

JANNA

Dead? Who are you talking about?

ALDEN

The Fucinato's.

Janna sits on the couch; she appears dazed.

J.J.

Okay, this is heavy. I'm out of here.

J.J. goes toward the door, but Tara blocks his way.

TARA

Just chill out for a second, J.J.

ALDEN

I didn't do it. Nora set me up. She put something in my drink.

J.J.

(to Tara)

Get the hell out of my way.

TARA

Promise you won't tell anyone.

JANNA

J.J., he obviously didn't do it. Would he be here if he did?

J.J. backs away from the door and appears disgruntled.

J.J.

This is fucked up. I'm denying everything when the cops come. I don't know shit.

TARA

Promise you won't tell.

J.J.

Fine; all right. Now get out of my way.

Tara moves out of J.J.'s way and he leaves the apartment.

TARA

We can't trust him.

ALDEN

You girls shouldn't get involved.

JANNA

AS IF? Look, I have a mini recorder;  
you could get Nora to confess.

Janna goes to a dresser and starts looking in a drawer.

JANNA (CONT'D)

I used to have a boyfriend over there.

She holds up a key she has found in the drawer.

JANNA (CONT'D)

Bingo!

She comes to Alden and puts the key in his hand.

JANNA (CONT'D)

He went away, but the key stayed.

ALDEN

Will you two hang on to my camera case?

TARA

Can we edit our video in prison?

INT. THE CASCADIA TERRACE APARTMENTS – DUSK

Alden enters the building and goes to the elevator.

INT. THE HALLWAY NEAR NORA'S APARTMENT

Alden knocks on a door. An attractive YOUNG WOMAN answers.

ALDEN

Hello, I was looking for Nora Rose, uh,  
Rosetti. She has black hair. . . .

YOUNG WOMAN

Oh, yeah, two doors down.



INT. THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE NORA'S APARTMENT

Alden knocks; Nora opens the door, and Alden pushes his way inside.

NORA

Get out of my apartment! GET OUT!

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT

ALDEN

NO. You haven't left me any options.

NORA

It's a no brainer. Get on an airplane.

ALDEN

Tell me what happened last night.

NORA

It's pretty straightforward. You shot holes in my boyfriend and his wife.

ALDEN

You know that's a lie.

NORA

Well, it's in the papers; read it yourself. Call the editor to complain.

She hands him a newspaper, goes to a counter, and picks up her cell phone. He grabs it from her and crushes it with his foot.

NORA (CONT'D)

That was an eight-hundred-dollar phone, sweetheart. Not that you care.

ALDEN

Tell me what happened at Tony's house.

NORA

Nothing worse than a postman with amnesia.

ALDEN

You put something in my drink.

NORA

That's an interesting theory.

ALDEN

You drugged me; tell me the truth.

NORA

Seems there's two versions floating around,  
and yours is up for a fiction award.

He comes toward her and grabs her wrist as she lights a cigarette.

NORA (CONT'D)

You're hurting my wrist, Alden.

He lets go and she moves around him and goes to an armoire. He turns  
and she stands with her back towards him.

ALDEN

I didn't mean to hurt you. I love you.

NORA

You have a funny way of showing it.

ALDEN

I would never hurt you, Nora.

NORA

You didn't feel that way about my phone.

ALDEN

I got you on film, you know. I filmed  
you with Tony in your apartment.

NORA

It's sick to film people without their  
permission. So where is this film?

ALDEN

At my house. For what it's worth, I filmed you  
because I love you. I still love you.

NORA

That's flattering. Did you get me naked?

ALDEN

It wasn't that kind of film, Nora.

NORA

Too bad. You know, I'm an artist too.

She takes a pistol from the armoire and points it at him.

NORA (CONT'D)

I'm into dot to dot. (MORE)

He moves toward the door, but she cuts him off, and he stops.

NORA (CONT'D)  
 BACK UP! We're going to get that film.

ALDEN  
 The police have it by now.

NORA  
 Nice try. Let's go.

EXT. THE SIDEWALK OF THE CASCADIA TERRACE APARTMENTS

Alden and Nora go to Nora's Lexus. She hands him the keys.

NORA (CONT'D)  
 You drive.

INT. JANNA AND TARA'S ROOM

Janna and Tara watch Alden and Nora leaving her apartment.

JANNA  
 C'mon, let's follow them.

TARA  
 Are you nuts?

JANNA  
 I swear I'm going to punch you.

TARA  
 Sorry, this is my first murder.

They leave the window and rush to exit the apartment.

INT. THE LEXUS – NIGHT

Alden sees Janna and Tara's yellow Carman Ghia in his mirror.

ALDEN  
 You know you'll never get away with this.

NORA  
 What could I do? You kidnapped me.

ALDEN  
 The police have my house staked out.

NORA  
 Then you'll have to figure a way in,  
 won't you? And if you don't. . .

ALDEN

What? You'll kill me — like you killed the Fucinato's? All for money.

NORA

Don't be naïve. Money makes the world go 'round. I learned that a long time ago. Dancing wasn't about sex. It was always about money.

The recorder suddenly shuts off and she hears it and turns to him. She points the gun at him and he nervously glances at her.

NORA

What was that sound?

ALDEN

What. . .uh, what sound?

NORA

Empty your pockets. EMPTY THEM!

He takes the cassette recorder out and hands it to her.

NORA (CONT'D)

WHAT IS THIS — A RECORDER?

ALDEN

It's just a radio.

She tosses it out the window. He passes the turnoff to his house.

NORA

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

ALDEN

I'm taking the scenic route.

NORA

TURN AROUND OR I'LL SHOOT!

ALDEN

Go ahead, you'd be doing me a favor.

NORA

Turn around or I swear I'll shoot.

ALDEN

No, you won't. You shoot and you'll end up in that river down there.

NORA

Maybe jellyfish do have backbones.

They pass a white covered bridge; the road swings around a reservoir. The lights of Mom's Pies show and when they're close Alden doesn't slow down. She grabs the wheel and they struggle and the car veers into the parking lot. It spins on the gravel, and Nora bumps her head, but quickly recovers.

Alden floors the gas pedal and steers the car back towards town.

NORA (CONT'D)

STOP!

ALDEN

We're going to have a little talk with the police. I'm sure they'll want to hear what I have on tape.

They pass Tara and Janna in the Carman Ghia. The girls pull into Mom's Pies parking lot and follow the Lexus.

Nora points the gun at Alden's head.

NORA

You have another tape?

ALDEN

Yeah, and reinforcements. That Carman Ghia behind us are police. They've been following us since we left.

She looks out the rearview window.

NORA

That's a good one. A Carman Ghia. Okay, pull over. I said, PULL OVER!

He parks at the covered bridge, shuts the engine off. The Carman Ghia passes them and continues down the highway.

NORA (CONT'D)

Looks like your friends aren't going to help you. Let's have that tape.

He hands it to her, opens the door, and runs. She fires the pistol twice, and he's hit in his thigh, but gets to the covered bridge, and pulls himself onto a rafter. She gets in the driver's seat and starts the car. She drives over the bridge. When the car passes, Alden drops to the ground. Nora pulls around and Alden hides by the water. Nora turns left and Alden gets up and begins walking.

EXT. THE HIGHWAY

Alden is limping, and suddenly he falls on the gravel.

ALDEN  
 (to himself)  
 Get up. . .GET UP!

TWO MILES DOWN THE HIGHWAY

Nora sees something and parks her car. She hears a noise and fires her pistol. A doe leaps from the brush and runs up the slope.

NORA  
 UGH!

She gets back in her car and keeps driving.

INT. JANNA AND TARA'S CARMAN GHIA

TARA  
 They stopped at the bridge. Turn around!

Janna pulls the car around. They come to the bridge and park.

JANNA  
 Where do you think they went?

TARA  
 I don't know. Let's go up the highway.

INT. MOM'S PIES CAFE

Alden enters, and at the sound of the bells attached to the front door, a fifty-something WOMAN OWNER glances at him.

WOMAN OWNER  
 Good evening, may I help you?

ALDEN  
 Yeah, just a cup of coffee and, uh,  
 a slice of that cherry pie there.  
 Do you have a bathroom?

WOMAN OWNER  
 Yeah; around the corner, on your left.

INT. MOM'S PIES BATHROOM

Alden tears a strip of cloth from his t-shirt and binds the wound.

EXT. A PHONE BY THE BATHROOM

Alden dials the Gateway Mail Facility.

LILY (V.O.)  
Gateway Mail Facility, Lily speaking.

ALDEN  
LILY – THIS IS ALDEN.

LILY (V.O.)  
Alden? Hey, how's your retirement going?

ALDEN  
It's. . .uh. . .it's killing me.

LILY (V.O.)  
Come on in if you want some work.

ALDEN  
Listen – Lily, could you come get me?

LILY (V.O.)  
What?

ALDEN  
My truck broke down up the McKenzie.  
I need a ride into town.

LILY (V.O.)  
A ride? Are you joking? Alden?

ALDEN  
I. . .never mind. . . .

He hangs up the phone and goes inside the shop.

INT. AT A BOOTH IN MOM'S PIES

Alden is drinking coffee, and eating pie. He stares at the ceiling, which is covered with business cards, and spots one with a knight slaying a dragon.

Janna and Tara enter Mom's Pies and rush to Alden.

JANNA  
ALDEN! GOD – ARE WE GLAD TO SEE YOU!  
ARE YOU OKAY?

Alden stands and grimaces from the pain of his leg wound.

ALDEN

We need to get out of here.

TARA

Is something wrong with your leg?

ALDEN

Nothing serious. Let's go.

INT. NORA'S LEXUS

Nora is waiting in her Lexus in Mom's Pies parking lot, beneath trees, and when Alden and the girls drive away, she follows.

INT. JANNA'S CARMAN GHIA

Alden lies on the back seat. Tara sees the blood on his pants.

TARA

MY GOD – what happened to your leg?

ALDEN

Nora shot me.

JANNA

That BITCH!

ALDEN

It's just a flesh wound. I got blood on your backseat. I'm sorry.

JANNA

Screw the seat! We care about you!

ALDEN

I didn't want to freak you out.

TARA

Too late; I'm officially freaked out. Take him to a hospital, Janna.

ALDEN

No. I don't have enough proof yet.

JANNA

We'll get her. Look, my sister is a nurse. She can stitch your leg. I'll phone her.

ALDEN

Nora will come after you.



TARA

Let her try. I've got kitchen knives  
that would scare any mass murderer.

Janna takes out her cell phone and calls her sister.

JANNA

Ruby? This is Janna. Can I come over?

EXT. RUBY BALLARD'S HOUSE IN FAIRFIELD — NIGHT

Janna pulls the car in front of her sister's Tudor home.

INT. JANNA'S CAR

Alden sleeps. Janna and Tara turn to look at him.

JANNA

What kind of woman would do this?

TARA

The upwardly mobile kind. So what  
are you going to tell your sister?

JANNA

That he's going through a messy divorce?

TARA

What if Nora comes after us?

JANNA

I thought you weren't afraid of her.

TARA

She kind of freaks me out.

Janna touches Alden's shoulder. He opens his eyes, and sits up.

ALDEN

Where are we?

JANNA

My sister's house. Listen, you should  
use an alias. What's your middle name?

ALDEN

Patrick.

EXT. AT THE FRONT DOOR

Janna rings the doorbell and her sister, RUBY, answers the door. She's an attractive woman, in her late thirties.

RUBY  
I was worried. It's nearly eight.  
Hello Tara. And this is your friend?

She offers her hand to Alden.

ALDEN  
Patrick. Patrick O'Donnell.

RUBY  
Ruby Ballard. Please, come in.

EXT. THE STREET A HALF-BLOCK AWAY

Nora is sitting in her car. She watches the trio go into the house and she starts her car. She does a U-turn and drives off.

INT. RUBY BALLARD'S HOUSE

The entrance hall widens, and they enter a living room with a high ceiling. An elderly blind woman, DORIS SNOW, sits by a fireplace in a green wingback chair. She's grinning like a mad woman.

DORIS  
We held off dinner for you.  
(to Alden)  
And you are Janna's and Tara's friend?

ALDEN  
Yes. . .Patrick O'Donnell.

DORIS  
Nice to meet you. Y'know, Tara, I haven't played chess since we last played. Ruby's boys are no competition.  
(to Ruby's boys)  
JAKE! AARON! DINNERTIME!

JAKE AND AARON BALLARD come downstairs and are agog at Alden.

JAKE  
He can't fit in our beds, mom!

RUBY  
Mind your manners, boys. This is Janna's friend, Patrick. Now set the table. (MORE)

AT THE KITCHEN TABLE — TEN MINUTES LATER

Doris ladles soup into bowls and Ruby sets them before everyone.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Go ahead and start, the good Lord  
knows we've been waiting.

DORIS

Amen.

Alden looks pale and totters as they begin eating. Janna catches his sleeve, but the fabric rips and he falls onto the floor.

RUBY

Dear God!

Everyone gathers around Alden, who lies unconscious on the floor.

DORIS

What happened?

TARA

Patrick fell off his chair!

JANNA

Ruby – get an icepack and a washcloth!  
He's cut his eyebrow!

DORIS

What made him fall? Is he sick?

Janna holds the icepack on Alden's eyebrow.

RUBY

His leg's bleeding, Janna. He didn't  
get that by falling. He's waking up.  
Janna, just tell me what's going on.

JANNA

I will. Let's get him in the bathroom.

Janna and Tara help drag Alden to the bathroom.

INT. THE BATHROOM – A FEW MINUTES LATER

Alden lies on the floor. Ruby puts a bandage on his eyebrow.

RUBY

You bled a lot.

ALDEN

What happened to my shirt?

RUBY

Janna grabbed you, or you'd have split  
your head open. Take your pants off.  
Let me look at that cut on your leg.

They help Alden remove his pants. Ruby stares at the wound.

RUBY (CONT'D)

My god, how did you get this?

ALDEN

I caught it on a fence.

RUBY

Oh? Janna, get the peroxide.

Ruby pours peroxide on the wound and Alden grimaces.

RUBY (CONT'D)

Now tell me how you really got this  
wound. It looks like a bullet wound.

Jake opens the door a crack. Ruby shuts it.

JAKE

Why can't I come in?

RUBY

Because I said so. Janna, what does  
this have to do with his divorce?

JANNA

They got into a fight. She shot him.

RUBY

Sweet Jesus. We should phone the police!

ALDEN

No, I don't want the police involved.

RUBY

Okay, I'll stitch you up. But you need  
to go to the hospital, tonight.

ALDEN

No hospital. No. . . .

He passes out.

INT. A BEDROOM IN RUBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Alden is asleep, and DREAMS. . .

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE:

EXT. A GRASSY KNOLL — DAY

SAINT SIGFRID of Wexlow passes by with a head on a platter. Alden sees it is his own head.

SAINT SIGFRID

Every job-related injury must be reported to your supervisor, and requires the use of Postal Form CA-1.

DON QUIXOTE, approaches on horseback, dressed in armor.

DON QUIXOTE

God bless the inventor of sleep, the cloak that covers all men's thoughts; the food that cures all hunger; the balancing weight that levels the shepherd with the king and the simple with the wise. You need sleep señor.

END DREAM SEQUENCE:

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Nora stands in front of a mirror admiring her figure. She has dyed her hair blonde and removed her body rings. She's dressed in a black silk robe and puts on her lipstick.

NORA

I'll have them eating out of my hands. Honestly, officer, I was shocked when I saw my husband's picture in the paper. I had no idea his jealousy over my boyfriend would lead to murder. But you know how insane postal workers can be.

EXT. AERIAL VIEW OF THE CASCADIA TERRACE APARTMENTS

NORA (V.O.)

(insane laughter)

EXT. RUBY BALLARD'S HOUSE

The laughter echoes and is carried on the wind. It plunges down the chimney of Ruby Ballard's house.

INT. RUBY BALLARD'S LIVING ROOM

Doris is reading in her green chair. A dying fire glows in the hearth. She sits up when she hears Nora's laughter. A fly buzzes by her and she swats it with her Bible. It is a lucky shot, and the fly is knocked onto the glowing embers and sizzles.

DORIS

By God, I killed the Devil himself.

She rises and feels her way down the hall to Ruby's room.

INT. RUBY'S BEDROOM

Ruby is in bed reading. The wind beats against her window and she tosses the book down and hides under the sheets. Doris enters.

DORIS

Ruby? Did you hear that wind? Ruby?

Ruby tosses the sheets off and looks at her.

RUBY

What do you mean coming scaring the b'Jesus out of me? Did you knock?

DORIS

I always knock. It's just this wind. The Devil loves windy nights you know.

RUBY

He's probably got better things to do.

DORIS

Maybe the storm has to do with Patrick.

Ruby gets out of bed and guides Doris to the hallway.

RUBY

Don't be ridiculous. Let me tuck you in bed. You're tired; you need your shot.

DORIS

I like Patrick. I think he likes you too.

EXT. RUBY BALLARD'S HOUSE — THE NEXT MORNING

Nora stands at the front door, in a black raincoat. She presses the doorbell, and is taken aback when Doris opens the door.

DORIS

Hello? Is someone there?

NORA

Good morning. I'm with the Republican Party. I'm taking a survey to see what candidates people voted for in the state election. Are you a voter, ma'am?

DORIS

Oh, yes. I always vote Republican.

NORA

Good. Would you have time for my survey?

DORIS

Oh, certainly. Come in.

INT. RUBY'S HOUSE — KITCHEN

Doris goes to the kitchen and Nora follows.

NORA

You have a lovely home. Do you live alone?

DORIS

No, I'm just a boarder like the man at the end of the hall. Would you like some tea?

NORA

Yes, thank you.

DORIS

What did you say your name was, dear?

NORA

Ugh, Julie, Julie Waxman.

She offers her hand, but Doris doesn't respond.

NORA (CONT'D)

And, uh, what was your name?

DORIS

Doris. Doris Whitaker Snow. Would chamomile tea be okay?

NORA

Yes, thanks. You get along pretty well. pretty well with your, uh. . .

DORIS

Oh, I been blind thirty years, honey. Diabetes and I are like old friends. (MORE)

Nora takes Ruby's card from a holder on the countertop.

DORIS (CONT'D)

It's a good thing. I could have lost my feet if not for Ruby and a lot of prayers.

NORA

Oh, um, yes, the Lord does answer prayers.

Doris hands Nora her teacup.

DORIS

That he does. Amen.

NORA

Who is this man who lives here?

DORIS

Oh yes - Patrick. Ruby's sister brought him here the other night. It was the strangest thing: he fainted dead away.

NORA

So what was wrong with him?

DORIS

I can't say, they took him to the bathroom and wouldn't let me in. Ruby's boys told me he had a bandage on his leg.

(beat)

Funny he hurt it falling off a chair.

Nora forcefully throws her teacup on the floor, and it shatters.

NORA

Oh! I'm so sorry! I'll clean it up.

DORIS

Did you cut yourself, dear?

NORA

No, but my dress is a little soaked. May I use your bathroom?

DORIS

Down the hall, second door on your right.

Nora removes her shoes and goes down the hall. She opens and shuts the bathroom door and goes to Alden's door.



INT. ALDEN'S ROOM

Nora enters and searches for Alden's movie camera. Alden is sleeping. She opens a closet and pauses when he stirs. She looks under his bed, and from her POV we see his peaceful face.

DORIS (V.O.)

Those are bedrooms dear! Do you need help finding the bathroom?

AT THE DOORWAY TO ALDEN'S BEDROOM

Nora steps back into the hallway and softly shuts Alden's door. We hear Doris humming a church hymn in the kitchen.

NORA

No, I found it - thank you!

THE LIVINGROOM

Nora carries her shoes to the front door and leaves the house. Doris wipes up the tea and picks up shards of teacup. She looks up at the sound of the front door shutting.

DORIS

JULIE? RUBY - IS THAT YOU?

Doris goes to door. She opens it and hears Nora drive away.

INT. BY RUBY'S FRONT DOOR

Doris listens to Nora drive away. In the reflection of one of her blind eyes we see Nora's car. We hear Nora's laughter.

DORIS

God have mercy.

INT. THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS CONCIEGE AREA - NIGHT

J.J. is reading a newspaper. The main headline reads: 'Reward Offered in Double Homicide.'

INT. THE HALLWAY BY JANNA AND TARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

J.J. looks left and right and finds the girls' door key. He has a flashlight in his hand and enters the apartment.

INT. JANNA AND TARA'S APARTMENT

He turns on the flashlight, opens the refrigerator, makes a sandwich, and continues looking. He finds the metal camera case behind a window curtain.

J.J.

YEAH! J.J. you're gonna be rich!

He takes the case and heads toward the door. The lights come on and we see Nora has a pistol aimed at him.

NORA

It's not polite to eat and run.

J.J. backs up into the middle of the room.

J.J.

GOD! You scared the hell out of me!

NORA

That's the idea. Have a seat.

He sits on the couch. She sits facing him.

J.J.

They're gonna miss me downstairs.  
Hey - y'all are Alden's wife. I remember you from the street. Nora - yeah, that's you. You get a makeover or something?

NORA

Mmm, handsome and smart; I like that.  
So listen, Einstein, I'll make this simple so you can understand. You're going to give me that case.

J.J.

That gun's making me uncomfortable.

She runs her fingers over the top of her exposed cleavage.

NORA

Really? Mmm, you make me feel guilty.

J.J.

Alden was one lucky man.

NORA

Looks like his luck ran out.

J.J.

Yeah, well, maybe so.

NORA  
Let's have the case.

J.J.  
Ain't nothin' in here but tools.

NORA  
Nice try. Open it.

He lays it down and opens it. Satisfied, she shuts it.

J.J.  
I found it; finders keepers.

NORA  
What do you want with Alden's camera?

J.J.  
I figured there might be something on it.  
Looks like you figured the same thing.

NORA  
Then we can split the reward money.

She takes a bottle from her coat and hands it to him.

NORA (CONT'D)  
Let's celebrate our good fortune, J.J.

J.J.  
Yeah, alright. How'd you know my name?

NORA  
Woman's intuition. Let's celebrate.

He nods, opens the bottle, and takes a long swig.

J.J.  
Whew, this whiskey has got some kick.

NORA  
More than you know.

He offers her the bottle, but she declines. He takes a couple more swigs and sets the bottle on the coffee table.

J.J.  
So, what? You gonna shoot me, now?

NORA  
We'll invite the cops for milk and cookies.

J.J.

You're one twisted chick. Sure you don't want a drink? I hate to drink alone.

NORA

I don't have to drink to have a good time. Now call the cops.

She picks up the phone that's sitting on the coffee table, and hands it to him, with a slip of paper that has the police phone number.

NORA (CONT'D)

Tell them to meet you in front of this hotel at ten tonight. Tell them you have info about Alden White. Mention me or the camera and I'll blow a hole in you big enough to stuff that sandwich in.

He dials the number.

INT. DETECTIVE HARRISON'S OFFICE IN DOWNTOWN FAIRFIELD

The phone rings and Harrison picks up the receiver.

HARRISON

Detective Harrison speaking.

J.J. (V.O.)

Hello, my name is J.J. Cotner. I have info to help you catch Mr. White.

HARRISON

I'm listening.

J.J. (V.O.)

Meet me in front of the Conquistador Arms Hotel, on Broadway, at ten tonight.

Harrison writes down the address.

HARRISON

The Conquistador Arms. So how will I recognize you?

J.J.

I'm black and handsome.

J.J. hangs up the phone. Nora lights a cigarette.

J.J. (CONT'D)

So how did I do?

NORA

You were perfect.

J.J.

Cool. Now let's chill out. I'm tired.

He slumps on the couch, but she helps him to his feet.

NORA

No, the girls will be home soon. Let's take a little walk. You carry the case.

J.J.

Whatz about my sandwich?

NORA

I'll get you another one.

J.J.

Hey, Noraz, you're all rightz.

INT. THE HALL

Nora helps J.J. walk to the elevator and they get in.

INT. THE ELEVATOR

J.J. looks about to pass out. The elevator goes up.

J.J.

We goin' up on the roof?

NORA

Yeah, where it's peaceful as can be.

The elevator stops on the top floor and they step out and walk up a short flight of stairs to the rooftop door.

EXT. THE ROOF

Nora opens the door and she and J.J. walk on the roof.

J.J.

You still thinkinz of shootin' me?

NORA

(whispers in his ear)

I wouldn't shoot a cute little teddy bear like you. We're partners now.

INT. DETECTIVE HARRISON'S OFFICE — DAY

Nora, dressed in a large red hat, a tight red dress, and sunglasses, sits in a chair facing Detective Harrison. Detective Jackson leans against the wall and checks out her shapely figure.

HARRISON

So, Ms. Rosetti. . .uh, Ms. Rose.

NORA

Call me Nora, all my friends do.

HARRISON

You say your husband threatened you?

NORA

Two days ago. He threatened to kill me if I turned him in, and smashed my cell phone when I tried to phone the police.

She removes her hat and sunglasses. She still has a nuance of a bruise from where she hit her forehead during her drive with Alden.

JACKSON

That son-of-a. . .

NORA

It wasn't the first time.

HARRISON

Your fresh bruise is turning yellow, miss. I suppose you'll want to press charges?

NORA

I don't like your tone, detective. My husband wants to kill me.

HARRISON

Take it easy, lady. Have a seat.

Harrison motions for Nora to sit, and she sits. From Jackson's POV he ogles her. Their eyes meet, and she smiles slightly.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

So what happened after he hit you?

NORA

He kidnapped me. He wanted me to help him get a passport. He offered me cash. He said he took it from the Fucinato's.

(MORE)

Nora lays a thick envelope of cash on the desktop.

NORA (CONT'D)

Here it is – five thousand dollars.

JACKSON

So why didn't you go along with his plan?

NORA

He killed my boyfriend.

HARRISON

That's noble of you, but I can't help but wonder why when the media plastered your husband's face everywhere, you didn't come forward. Why is that?

NORA

What are you implying?

HARRISON

It's funny you've showed up just days after the Fucinato family offered a one-hundred-thousand-dollar reward.

NORA

I wasn't in the country when the Fucinato's died.

HARRISON

Where were you?

NORA

I was in Mazatlan, drinking tequila.

Nora hands her ticket receipt to Harrison.

HARRISON

Why didn't your boyfriend go with you?

NORA

He was supposed to but he didn't show.

HARRISON

They didn't invite you to the funeral?

NORA

No. I sat in the back. I was discreet.

HARRISON

I'll bet you were. So where's your husband?

NORA

Ask the black front desk clerk at the Conquistador Arms Hotel.

HARRISON

We'd like to, but he's not talking. We found him face down on the sidewalk in front of the hotel.

NORA

How awful. Remind me not to stay in that hotel. Did he commit suicide?

HARRISON

Maybe. Funny you didn't hear the sirens.

NORA

I was at a concert. I didn't get home until after midnight.

She takes a ticket stub from her purse and shows Harrison.

HARRISON

Hmm. . .you missed quite a show at the Conquistador. Did you go alone?

NORA

I'm not the one you should be cross-examining, detective. You treat me like I did something, Mr. Harrison. I'm the innocent party in all of this.

HARRISON

I'm just doing my job, Ms. Rosetti.

NORA

You could have fooled me. Here's my card, I think I'll be going now.

She hands him her card and puts on her hat and sunglasses.

HARRISON

Just one more thing. Did your husband have friends at the Conquistador Arms?

NORA

Now that you mention it he did brag about sleeping with two college girls.

HARRISON

We'll check it out. Thanks for coming in.



JACKSON

Don't worry, Ms. Rosetti, we'll catch him.

She and Jackson exchange smiles. She goes to the door and stops.

NORA

Thank you. Oh, I almost forgot.

She takes Ruby's business card and hands it to Detective Harrison.

NORA (CONT'D)

I found this business card at our house when I went to reconcile with my husband.

HARRISON

Ruby Ballard. Okay, we'll check it out.

JACKSON

Can we reach you at the Cascadia Terrace?

NORA

Call me day or night, detective.

Jackson watches her as she walks down the hallway.

HARRISON

Down, boy. Follow her. See where she goes and who she talks to.

JACKSON

SAY WHAT?

HARRISON

Take a camera with a telephoto lens.

JACKSON

You mean you don't buy her story?

HARRISON

No. Something's rotten in Denmark.

INT. RUBY BALLARD'S HOUSE - DAY

Ruby and Doris are seated in the living room.

RUBY

What did the woman look like?

DORIS

That's a good one, Ruby.

RUBY

What do you think she looked like?

DORIS

She smelled like a French whore. She broke a teacup. She went to the bathroom to clean up. I think she poked around in Patrick's room.

INT. SAINT PATRICK'S DAY IN RUBY'S KITCHEN — EVENING

Ruby brings a lighted birthday cake to Alden, who is sitting at the kitchen table with Aaron, Jake, Doris, Janna, and Tara. On the cake top we see the words 'Happy Birthday To The Two Patricks.' The kitchen is decorated with green paper shamrocks.

ALL (EXCEPT ALDEN)

Happy birthday dear Patrick. . .

INTERCUTS of Alden being served a slice of cake and ice cream, receiving gifts, and the chair he's sitting on suddenly breaking.

ALDEN

Sorry. . .I'll fix it. . .

RUBY

Don't bother. Only Jesus the carpenter's son could fix that old chair now.

INT. THE HALLWAY — AN HOUR LATER

Janna takes Alden aside.

JANNA

Someone burglarized our apartment. It happened the night J.J. died.

ALDEN

Nora?

JANNA

It wouldn't surprise me.

INT. DETECTIVE HARRISON'S CAR — DUSK

Harrison is in his car by Ruby's house. His cell phone rings.

HARRISON

Harrison speaking.

JACKSON (V.O.)

It's Jackson. I'm gonna get dinner.

EXT. ON THE STREET BY NORA'S APARTMENT HOUSE

HARRISON (V.O.)  
Okay. You can go home at eleven.  
See anything suspicious?

JACKSON  
No. In my opinion, this is a total  
waste of time.

HARRISON (V.O.)  
Opinions are like underwear; everyone's  
got 'em but one size don't fit all.

JACKSON  
You ought to write that one down.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CASCADIA TERRACE APARTMENTS

Jackson dials her number on his cell phone.

NORA (V.O.)  
Hello?

JACKSON  
Ms. Rosetti? This is Detective Jackson.  
I wanted to ask you a few more questions.

NORA (V.O.)  
You want me to come downtown?

JACKSON  
No, I'm at the entrance to your building.

NORA (V.O.)  
Oh? I'll buzz you in. Room 466.

EXT. NORA'S APARTMENT DOOR

Jackson knocks and Nora opens the door dressed in a nightgown.

JACKSON  
Sorry to drop in on you so late, Ms.  
Rosetti. May I ask you some questions?

NORA  
Sure, I'm a night owl. Come on in.

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT

NORA

Have a seat. Want a drink?

JACKSON

I'll take a beer if you have one.

She bends by her refrigerator and offers him a lovely backside view. She turns, sees he's watching, and smiles.

JACKSON (CONT'D)

I'm confused why you married a postman.

She hands him a beer and sits by him on the couch.

NORA

Can't postmen be exciting?

JACKSON

I don't know; you tell me.

NORA

He had his moments.

She puts a cigarette in her mouth, and he lights it for her.

NORA (CONT'D)

Thanks. Is that why you're here; to ask why I married a postman? Detective. . .

JACKSON

Jackson. Morgan Jackson.

NORA

So, Morgan, what brings you here?

JACKSON

I have a lonely job. I'm watching you.

NORA

See anything of interest?

JACKSON

Plenty.

NORA

Morgan. . .that's a nice, strong name. Are you any good, I mean, at what you do?

JACKSON

I have my moments.

Nora sets the cigarette on an ashtray, leans over and kisses him.

NORA

Ooh, what's under your jacket?

JACKSON

Just my gun. Sorry I poked you.

He lays his holster and gun on the coffee table.

NORA

Mmm, that's okay. I like big guns.

INT. THE BEAVER BAR, A DAY LATER - NIGHT

Nora sits at a table with Ramon and Clark.

RAMON

I like your classy blonde look, Nora.

NORA

Blondes have more fun, and in a couple of weeks I'll have even more.

RAMON

Yeah? You robbin' a bank or somethin'?

NORA

Sort of. You boys could earn a grand by doing me one more favor.

Clark, who's been watching the girls, turns to Nora.

CLARK

Seems like we've done you plenty of favors. A hell of a lot more than you've done us.

NORA

Now I need you to take care of two college girls at the Conquistador Arms. They've taken something of mine. A film.

She hands them a slip of paper.

RAMON

Don't sound like no crime to me, Nora.

NORA

I want the film returned.

CLARK

What about the college girls?

NORA

Make them disappear.

RAMON

That's not our thing, Nora.

CLARK

Murder is expensive, Nora.

NORA

I can pay you.

CLARK

I'm thinking ten apiece, eh, Ramon?

RAMON

Yeah, and we get paid upfront.

She hands each of them five thousand dollars.

NORA

Half now, and half when the job is done.  
Pick them up at three, tomorrow afternoon.

INT. DETECTIVE JACKSON'S CAR — AFTERNOON

Jackson's cell phone rings.

JACKSON

Jackson here.

HARRISON (V.O.)

It's Harrison. See anything new?

JACKSON

Nothing unusual.

HARRISON (V.O.)

All right; go to the Conquistador Arms and talk to the girls Rosetti mentioned.

JACKSON

You got it. So is White at Ballard's house?

HARRISON (V.O.)

He shaved, but it's him. The SWAT team is going in at 6AM. It's a Tudor-style house at 2304 Agate Street. Be here; is that clear?

JACKSON

Crystal.

INT. JANNA AND TARA'S APARTMENT — AFTERNOON

Jackson sits in a chair, facing the girls on the couch.

JACKSON

So how well did you know Alden White?

TARA

We barely knew him.

JANNA

He filmed our. . .he had a camera.

JACKSON

He filmed your what?

JANNA

Our new music video.

JACKSON

Do you have a DVD of this video?

JANNA

No. Now if you'll excuse us.

JACKSON

Mr. White never gave you a copy?

TARA

No. It's time to go, detective.

The girls escort Jackson to the door.

JACKSON

So neither of you knows where White is?

TARA

We haven't seen him lately.

JACKSON

When we capture Mr. White, it won't look good if you knew something and didn't come forward. You could do jail time.

TARA

Thank you for the warning, detective.

JACKSON

Here's my card, just in case something jogs your memory. Call me anytime.

Jackson leaves the apartment, and Tara shuts the door.

TARA

Janna! You had to mention the film?

JANNA

He's going to find out eventually.

TARA

We should warn Alden. If they catch him at Ruby's our next gig will be in prison.

JANNA

I'm not lying to save my butt.

TARA

Quit playing Florence Nightingale. Alden may have killed the Fucinato's.

JANNA

You know he didn't, Tara.

EXT. THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS HOTEL

Jackson sees Ramon's red Camaro pull up in front of the hotel. Ramon and Clark enter the hotel.

TEN MINUTES LATER

Ramon and Clark escort Tara and Janna, and get in the Camaro, and pull away. Jackson follows and dials Harrison.

INT. DETECTIVE HARRISON'S CAR

HARRISON

Harrison speaking.

JACKSON (V.O.)

Harrison - this is Jackson. I'm driving west on the Lorane Highway towards Crow, five miles out of Fairfield.

HARRISON

WHAT? You should be watching those girls!

INT. DETECTIVE JACKSON'S CAR



From Jackson's POV, show the Camaro ahead on the road.

JACKSON

I AM! They've been kidnapped by two  
biker dudes in a red Camaro!

HARRISON (V.O.)

Kidnapped? Now, how do you know that?  
Did you see a weapon?

JACKSON

No, but the girls were going to a gig.

HARRISON (V.O.)

Hell, they could be girls' band.

JACKSON

Nah. I got a bad vibe about it.

HARRISON (V.O.)

Damn it Morgan, it'll take us twenty  
minutes to catch up to you! Alright,  
I'll send backup. Stay in contact.

JACKSON

You got it.

Harrison pulls away from Ruby's house and is driving.

INT. DETECTIVE HARRISON'S CAR

JACKSON (V.O.)

They're turning up a logging road.

EXT. THE LORANE HIGHWAY

Jackson pulls to the side of the road by the logging road.

HARRISON (V.O.)

Hold your position until we get there.

Jackson puts a white handkerchief on a fence post nail.

JACKSON

No can do, chief. Look for a white  
handkerchief on a fencepost.

HARRISON (V.O.)

Jackson - hold your position! Jackson?

INT. DETECTIVE JACKSON'S CAR

Jackson turns his cell phone off and drives up the muddy road.

JACKSON  
(to himself)  
What the hell am I getting myself into?

EXT. A LOGGING ROAD – DUSK

Clark pulls Tara by the arm from the Camaro. Ramon pushes Janna next to Tara. Clark spreads a sleeping bag on the ground.

RAMON  
Take your clothes off, ladies.

TARA  
You won't get away with this.

Ramon shows them his pistol.

RAMON  
I can be very persuasive.

Janna and Tara begin to undress.

CLARK  
DAMN! They're fine, eh, Ramon?

Ramon backhands Clark. Clark staggers back.

RAMON  
Stupid! I told you. . .

CLARK  
Sorry, dude, I forgot.

RAMON  
You see these chicks and think of  
pleasure, but all they are is money.  
Let's take care of business. Got it?

CLARK  
Okay.

Tara and Janna run up the slope and Ramon and Clark follow.

RAMON  
STOP! STOP – OR YOU'RE DEAD!

EXT. THE OTHER SIDE OF THE KNOLL

Jackson meets Janna and Tara cresting the knoll. When Ramon sees Jackson he lifts his pistol to fire, but Jackson shoots first and the round hits Ramon in the chest. He flips backwards and lies still. Clark runs to the woods. Jackson shoots, but misses.

JACKSON

You girls ought to be more careful about your choice of boyfriends.

TARA

That's not funny!

JACKSON

Sorry, bad joke. Are you okay?

TARA

Are you going to let him get away?

JACKSON

He won't get far. There are cops waiting for him on the road. Judging by the poison oak, he'll have a hell of a rash tomorrow.

The girls are looking at Ramon, who has not moved.

JANNA

Is he dead?

JACKSON

Maybe so. Did you girls know them?

JANNA

We never saw them before.

TARA

How did you know to follow us?

JACKSON

I'm your guardian angel. Has this jogged your memory of Mr. White?

JANNA

He's in a house. . .

TARA

Shut up, Janna.

JACKSON

Would that be a Tudor on Agate Street?

JANNA

How did you know?

JACKSON

We've known for a little while.

JANNA

We only knew him from the hotel.

TARA

We don't have anything more to say  
until we speak to a lawyer.

JACKSON

Have it your way. But if I was you  
I'd be looking to save myself. Ain't  
many rock stars comin' out of prison.

EXT. RUBY BALLARD'S KITCHEN — MORNING

Doris is stirring sugar into her coffee. Alden enters and sits.

DORIS

Patrick! You're an early riser. I  
just brewed some coffee. Want some?

ALDEN

Yeah, sure.

DORIS

Serve yourself, I'm shaky before I have  
my insulin. Watch out; it's hot. Sorry.

(beat)

I made coffee at the convent in Iowa.

ALDEN

You were a nun in Iowa?

DORIS

In Council Bluffs. Do you know it?

ALDEN

Yes. I have a confession to make.

DORIS

I'm not in that business.

ALDEN

When I was a teenager I met a nun.  
It was at a church rummage sale.

DORIS

Might have been me. I used to do rummage sales. Are you a Catholic?

ALDEN

I don't belong to any church.

DORIS

Oh? I met so many teenagers back then. Sorry, I can't recall meeting you. But my memory isn't what it used to be.

SFX: SEVERAL KNOCKS ON THE FRONT DOOR

DORIS (CONT'D)

Who do you suppose that is at this hour?

ALDEN

I'll get it.

Alden opens the door and SWAT POLICEMEN rush in.

SWAT POLICEMAN 1

(to other policeman)

GET THE CUFFS ON HIM!

DORIS

PATRICK! PATRICK!?

Four SWAT officers surround and handcuff her.

DORIS

RUBY! HELP! RUBY!

Ruby comes down the stairs and is quickly handcuffed.

SWAT POLICEMAN 2

(to Ruby)

Are there any other people in the house?

RUBY

JUST MY BOYS! DON'T HURT MY BOYS!

SWAT POLICEMAN 2

(to the SWAT officers)

CHECK THE UPSTAIRS!

The officers rush upstairs and return with Aaron and Jake.

SWAT POLICEMAN 1

BRING THEM HERE AND CHECK THE HOUSE!

A SWAT POLICEMAN struggles to get Alden's wrists manacled.

SWAT POLICEMAN 3  
THIS S.O.B. IS RESISTING!

ALDEN  
I'M NOT RESISTING!

Harrison and Jackson enter and stand over Alden.

HARRISON  
Alden White, you're under arrest for  
the murder of Tony and Claire Fucinato.  
Jackson, read him his rights.

RUBY  
WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU PEOPLE? YOU CAN'T  
BUST IN HERE! I'LL SUE! LET PATRICK GO!

HARRISON  
Ma'am, this man is a suspected murderer.  
His name isn't Patrick, it's Alden White.

INT. DETECTIVE HARRISON'S OFFICE

Alden sits in a chair in front of Detective Harrison's desk. A guard stands at the door. Detective Jackson stands by the desk. Harrison pushes the record button on a tape deck.

HARRISON  
You're a hard man to find. Maybe now you  
can tell us why you killed the Fucinato's.

ALDEN  
I didn't kill them. My wife did it.

HARRISON  
So, that's why you've been on the run  
spending the taxpayers' money?

ALDEN  
She framed me. She was Tony Fucinato's  
girlfriend. I was trying to get proof.

HARRISON  
She said you and Tony got into a fistfight  
a few weeks before the murder.

ALDEN  
But I didn't kill him. Nora did it.

HARRISON

You went to the Fucinato's house with the intent of killing them. We have your pistol. A neighbor saw you drive away. The paint left on their retaining wall matches the paint on your truck.

ALDEN

I went to the Fucinato's to meet Nora. She said she wanted to break up with Tony. When I got there they were both dead. Nora put something in my drink. When I woke, she was gone.

JACKSON

You were jealous of Tony. You went there planning to kill him. Claire Fucinato tried to intervene and you killed her too. Your wife was never there.

ALDEN

I mailed the gun to Nora. She must have used it. I filmed her and Tony fighting.

JACKSON

You filmed her?

ALDEN

Yes, from my apartment window.

JACKSON

You are a sicko. So where is this film?

ALDEN

Nora took it.

JACKSON

And how do you know that?

ALDEN

The girls told me.

JACKSON

Janna Sparks and Tara Sterling?

ALDEN

Yes, but how do you know them?

JACKSON

I saved them from the punks you hired.

ALDEN

What are you talking about?

HARRISON

They were kidnapped.

ALDEN

Are they okay?

HARRISON

They're fine. So we understand you shot their music video?

ALDEN

Yes, but I didn't kidnap them.

HARRISON

That brings us back to square one.

He signals the guard to take Alden, but Alden remains seated.

ALDEN

There's something else.

HARRISON

And what's that?

ALDEN

Nora kidnapped me.

JACKSON

Everyone's being kidnapped now.

HARRISON

She said you kidnapped her, Mr. White.

ALDEN

I tried to get her to confess. I recorded our conversation.

HARRISON

And where is this recording?

ALDEN

She took it the night she kidnapped me. She shot me as I escaped.

JACKSON

(to Harrison)

He's psychotic. No film, and no recording. Not a trace of anything. He's lying.



HARRISON

Where were you shot, Mr. White?

ALDEN

On my thigh. It was a flesh wound.  
Janna's sister, Ruby, sewed me up.

JACKSON

A likely story.

HARRISON

He's right, you have no proof. So how  
did the girls find you that night?

ALDEN

They followed us. We met at Mom's Pies.  
Janna took me to her sister's house.  
Ruby Ballard knew nothing.

JACKSON

We're wasting our time, chief.

Alden stands, and the guard grabs his arm.

ALDEN

YOU NEED TO HER BEFORE SHE KILLS AGAIN!

A CONFERENCE ROOM AT THE POLICE STATION – MORNING

Alden sits facing his lawyer, ULYSSES HOFFMANN.

ULYSSES

Mr. White? Ulysses Hoffmann; pleased to  
meet you. I've been going over the  
information on your case. I spoke with  
Miss Sparks and Miss Sterling this morning.

ALDEN

Are they all right?

ULYSSES

A little shaken up, but fine. They were  
released yesterday.

ALDEN

And how are Doris and Ruby and her boys?

ULYSSES

They're okay. But let's talk about you.

INT. THE CONFERENCE ROOM — AN HOUR LATER — MORNING

Ulysses is writing and looks up at Alden.

ULYSSES

So that's it?

ALDEN

Yes.

ULYSSES

I'll be candid; I advise you to plead guilty by reason of insanity. It was an act of passion. Plead guilty or they'll crucify you on the witness stand.

ALDEN

I'm not insane.

ULYSSES

Didn't you quit your postal job under duress? And the imaginary film and tape, and the supposed bullet wound. A jury would be sympathetic to a deranged mailman. We could plead temporary insanity.

ALDEN

I know what I did, and I know what I saw.

ULYSSES

Don't get excited. It doesn't matter what the truth is if you can't prove it.

INT. SACRED HEART HOSPITAL ELEVATOR — NIGHT

Nora stands in the back of the elevator with a hood shading her face. A pretty blonde nurse about Nora's size, with a gurney, stands in front of her. They're the only people in the elevator. Nora unties the belt of her rain jacket and clenches it in her hands but then notices the tray of syringes that sit on the gurney. She presses her pistol against the nurse's back and pushes the pause button on the elevator's panel.

NORA

Don't turn around and make me shoot you. What room is the prisoner being held in?

NURSE

The prisoner? Uh, he's on the fifth floor; Room 507; but you can't go in there.

NORA

What's in these syringes?

NURSE

They're sedative. Please don't hurt me.

NORA

Just do what I tell you to do. Inject yourself, and push the fifth-floor button.

The nurse nervously injects herself and pushes the button. The door opens and Nora directs the nurse into a hospital supply room.

NORA

Open it.

INT. THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE SUPPLY ROOM – MINUTES LATER

Nora emerges from the room dressed in the nurse's clothes.

INT. RAMON'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Ramon sleeps in a bed. A HISPANIC NURSE monitors his pulse. A POLICE GUARD sits nearby.

POLICE GUARD

How's he doing?

HISPANIC NURSE

Better. He lost a lot of blood, but the bullet missed his heart.

POLICE GUARD

As long as he can stand trial. It'd be better if he died. Ones like him should go back to Mexico, where they belong.

HISPANIC NURSE

Like HIM? Maybe he was BORN here, officer.

The nurse appears upset and leaves the room. The guard shrugs.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY

Nora sees the nurse leave the room and notices the police officer leave and enter the bathroom in the room.

INT. RAMON'S HOSPITAL ROOM

Nora takes a syringe with an air bubble in it, and injects Ramon in the arm. Ramon's body jerks, and the pulse indicator stops.

EXT. SACRED HEART HOSPITAL PARKING LOT — NIGHT

Nora walks out still dressed as a nurse, and gets in her car.

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT — NIGHT

Nora is checking her passport when the telephone rings.

NORA

Hello?

CLARK

Nora? This is Clark! You got to come get me! The cops shot Ramon.

NORA

Yeah, it's all over the news.

CLARK

That black S.O.B. tried to shoot me! My legs burn from the poison oak in the woods!

NORA

Relax, Clark. Where are you?

CLARK

In a phone booth, at the Crow County Store.

NORA

I'll be there in an hour.

EXT. CROW COUNTRY STORE — NIGHT

Nora stops and Clark gets in her car. She hands him a beer.

NORA

Here, I figured you'd be thirsty.

CLARK

Thanks, Nora. I totally need this.

(he takes a long drink)

It's been a total nightmare. I haven't eaten anything all day. Cops are everywhere. I got friends in L.A. I should book.

NORA

Mellow out. There's a diner out here where we can talk and make a plan.

She turns down a narrow road, and he looks perplexed.

CLARK

Uh, how's Ramon?

NORA

He died.

CLARK

Damn. Hey, where's this diner at?

NORA

We're almost there.

He takes a couple of drinks.

NORA (CONT'D)

You look tired, Clark. Let's pull over so you can get some air.

She stops the car, comes around to his door, and opens it. She helps him out and he stands unsteadily.

CLARK

I don't feel so good. Where are we?

NORA

We should walk. Lean on me.

He leans on her and she leads him to a very dark area surrounded by conifers, where there is a large stump.

NORA (CONT'D)

Here, sit down.

He sits on the stump, and she stands over him.

CLARK

Hey, Nora, I don't feelz so good. I'm gonna lie here a minute.

NORA

Yeah, just relax. Chill out.

He lies down. She takes a pistol from her purse. She points it at his head, but he opens his eyes and knocks the gun away.

CLARK

HEY! WHAT THE FUCK? NORA?

She is knocked down and crawls on her hands and knees to find the

pistol. As he gets to his feet, she finds it, turns, and shoots. Clark falls back on the stump, and she shoots him several times.

INT. NORA'S CAR

Nora gets in the car and drives off. When she reaches the main road she stops and looks at her cheek in the vanity mirror on the visor. There is a small scratch and a little blood. She dabs it with a tissue and drives away.

NORA  
(to herself)  
IDIOT!

EXT. THE TOWN OF CROW - DAY

Police cars and an ambulance are parked by the crime scene. Detective Jackson is speaking to a young boy named ROBBIE.

JACKSON  
So, Robbie, what did you hear from your house?

ROBBIE  
I heard whoosh! sounds.

JACKSON  
You're sure they weren't like fireworks?

ROBBIE  
No, they went whoosh! whoosh! like that.

JACKSON  
And then what happened?

ROBBIE  
Then a car drove away. I saw the lights.

JACKSON  
Did you see what kind of car? What color?

ROBBIE  
It was dark; I don't know.

The ambulance men carry Clark past them to the ambulance.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)  
Is that man dead or is he sleeping?

JACKSON  
He's dead, son.

ROBBIE

I thought so.

Robbie runs across the road to where his mom is standing.

INT. JANNA AND TARA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Janna and Tara watch the news. A FEMALE NEWSWOMAN is speaking.

FEMALE NEWSWOMAN (V.O.)

At Sacred Heart Hospital this afternoon, a nurse was accosted, and a patient, an alleged kidnapper, was murdered. Police suspect it's tied to a homicide in the town of Crow.

Inset photos of Ramon and Clark are on the screen.

JANNA

Those are the guys who kidnapped us!

TARA

I bet Nora hired them.

JANNA

Then she'll be coming after us next.

Janna gets up and takes a disc from a coffee table drawer.

TARA

Is that our music video stuff?

JANNA

Yeah. This disc is a window dub.

TARA

I thought all that was stolen?

JANNA

This was at a TV station then.

Janna puts the disc in the player. Tara goes into the kitchenette and puts a bag of popcorn in the microwave. On the TV there is footage of the girls in a park, lip-synching their songs.

TARA

I have a fat ass. Fast-forward it!

Janna pushes the remote button and there are various scenes of the girls playing their guitars, and of them laying on the bed asleep. Then there's footage of Nora's window.

JANNA

Tara, check this out.

Tara comes back with a bowl of popcorn.

TARA

What is it? Is that Nora's window?

JANNA

Yeah.

TARA

I don't think Alden knew he shot this.

The scene changes. A light goes on inside Nora's apartment. Her blinds go up and Nora stands at the window in a white negligee.

JANNA

GOD. . .it's Alden's ex-wife!

TARA

She has something in her hand. Oh,  
it's a gun, OH MY GOD! WHAT A PSYCHO!

Nora holds the pistol by her cheek. Janna pauses the video.

JANNA

Look at the date on the time code!

TARA

What about it?

JANNA

Alden supposedly shot the Fucinato's on  
March ninth. But the code read March eighth.

TARA

So? The police found Alden's gun at  
the Fucinato's with his prints on it.

JANNA

But if Nora has Alden's gun on the eighth,  
then she must have used it on the Fucinato's.

TARA

But how do we know that's Alden's gun?

JANNA

He said he mailed her his gun. Let's  
call Alden's lawyer, that Ulysses guy.



INT. DETECTIVE HARRISON'S OFFICE — DAY

Ulysses enters Detective Harrison's followed by a POLICE CLERK.

POLICE CLERK

I'm sorry, sir, he barged right in. . .

HARRISON

It's okay.

(to Ulysses)

I'm a very busy man, Mr. Hoffmann. I hope you have a good reason to disturb me.

Ulysses hands Detective Harrison a print of Nora with the gun.

ULYSSES

This is an enlargement of a scene on Janna Sparks's and Tara Sterling's music video. You can clearly see Miss Rosetti holding what appears to be the murder weapon.

HARRISON

There are millions of that model of pistol. Besides, you can Photoshop almost anything.

ULYSSES

Don't you want to catch the murderer?

HARRISON

The only thing I'm interested in catching is a good stiff drink and some sleep.

Ulysses hands a close-up photo and a magnifying glass to Harrison.

ULYSSES

Look at the scratch on the chamber area. How many have scratches like that?

Harrison looks at the pistol image with the magnifying glass.

HARRISON

Why didn't White mention this before?

ULYSSES

Maybe you weren't listening. Notice the date code. If that is the murder weapon, Ms. Rosetti has it the day before the murder.

Detective Harrison dials Detective Jackson's extension.

HARRISON  
 Okay, so maybe you're not wasting my time.  
 (to Jackson)  
 Jackson, come in here.

Detective Jackson enters Detective Harrison's office.

JACKSON  
 What's up, chief?

HARRISON  
 Did the Fucinato's cut Rosetti a check?

JACKSON  
 Yeah, the day of the arraignment.

HARRISON  
 Call them and stop payment. And get a  
 search warrant for Rosetti's apartment.

JACKSON  
 You're kidding, right?

HARRISON  
 White's lawyer brought in evidence.  
 We need to go to Rosetti's to see  
 if she owns a gun. Get a warrant. Check  
 with ballistics on the caliber of bullet  
 used to kill Clark Walker.

Detective Jackson exits. Detective Harrison gets up and grabs his  
 jacket and ushers Ulysses out the door.

ULYSSES  
 Where are we going?

HARRISON  
 To pay the judge a little visit,  
 and straighten this shit out.

INT. THE BANK OF AMERICA — DAY

Nora, dressed seductively, sits by the desk of MR. VAN DELPH.

VAN DELPH  
 This is a big check, Miss. . .

NORA  
 Rosetti. Nora Rosetti. And you are. . .?

VAN DELPH

Uh. . .Norman. Um, about this check.  
You understand it will take ten days  
for this check to clear?

She leans forward so he can see her cleavage.

NORA

Norman, I could make your interest rate  
rise significantly if you'll cash it now.

VAN DELPH

Oh. . .uh, I guess I could make an  
exception in this case. I just need to  
phone Mr. Fucinato to make sure it's okay.

NORA

Yeah, you do that.

He picks up the phone and dials Mr. Fucinato.

VAN DELPH

Hello, Mr. Fucinato? This is Mr. Van  
Delph at the Bank of America. I have a  
a Ms. Nora Rosetti here. She has a  
check from you. . .oh, she did? All right.  
Yes, I just wanted to be sure. Thank you.

He hangs up the phone.

VAN DELPH (CONT'D)

He says you're a hero and that you helped  
catch the man who killed his son.

NORA

I can't take all the credit.

VAN DELPH

You're very modest. So, if you'll follow  
me upstairs, we'll get the money for you.

NORA

It'll be my pleasure.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE BANK OF AMERICA

Nora hesitates on the sidewalk to touch up her lipstick.

INT. VAN DELPH'S OFFICE

Van Delph is tucking in his shirt. The intercom buzzes.

VAN DELPH

Yes?

SECRETARY (V.O.)

Mr. Van Delph? There's a Detective Jackson on line two for you sir.

Van Delph pulls open his window blinds and sees Nora opening her car door. He waves to her and answers the phone.

VAN DELPH

Mr. Van Delph here.

JACKSON (V.O.)

Mr. Van Delph I'm calling to warn you. A Ms. Rosetti may try to cash a check at your bank. You should delay her.

He glances out the window and sees Nora's car is gone.

VAN DELPH

I don't understand. Mr. Fucinato approved cashing it, so naturally, I. . .

JACKSON (V.O.)

She's already been there?

VAN DELPH

Yes, just five minutes ago. Is there a problem, officer? She seemed nice.

JACKSON (V.O.)

That's what we're trying to find out. But don't feel bad. She played me for a sucker too.

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT — DUSK

Nora, dressed in a black raincoat, shuts her suitcase. She looks at her passport and puts it in her purse. She takes a bottle of wine from a table and heads toward the door.

NORA

(to herself)

The problem with these girls is they don't get the proper rest they need.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE THE CASCADIA TERRACE APARTMENTS

Nora crosses the street to the Conquistador Apartments.

THE HALLWAY OUTSIDE NORA'S APARTMENT — AN HOUR LATER

The APARTMENT MANAGER opens the door of Nora's apartment for Detective Harrison and Jackson.

APARTMENT MANAGER

Miss Rosetti is a good tenant.

The detectives enter and the manager lingers at the doorway and watches them.

APARTMENT MANAGER (CONT'D)

But I suppose you have your reasons or you wouldn't have a search warrant, huh?

Harrison and Jackson begin looking around.

APARTMENT MANAGER (CONT'D)

She's a pretty lady, but that's no crime.

HARRISON

(to Jackson)

She appears to be going on a trip.

Detective Jackson picks up a travel brochure.

JACKSON

Looks like Mexico; she must like it hot.

HARRISON

Check out the bathroom for evidence.

INT. THE HALLWAY OF THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS — NIGHT

Alden, Tara, and Janna come from the elevator, in a jovial mood after having gone out for dinner. They open their apartment door. and Janna fumbles with the keys. Tara takes her keys.

TARA

Let me, you've had one too many beers.

Tara opens the door and they enter the apartment.

ALDEN

I'll repay Ruby for posting my bail.

JANNA

She can afford it. Besides, she'll get it back when they catch Nora.

TARA

And maybe we'll get the reward money.

JANNA

That would be sweet. And then I'm going to someplace sunny and quiet.

ALDEN

Favignana, Sicily, is where I would go.

JANNA

Favig-whatta?

INT. JANNA'S AND TARA'S APARTMENT

Tara lies down on the couch.

TARA

God, that Thai food made me sleepy.

The lights come on, the door closes, and Nora stands by the door with her pistol pointed at them. Janna steps back.

JANNA

OH!

NORA

You know how to keep a girl waiting.

Tara tries to rush towards Nora, but Alden stops her.

TARA

YOU WITCH! GET OUT OF OUR APARTMENT!

NORA

Sit down and shut up.

ALDEN

Nora, let the girls go. It's me you want.

NORA

Very big of you. Now sit at the table.

They sit facing Nora.

NORA (CONT'D)

I'm a little surprised to see you Alden. Did they let you out for good behavior?

ALDEN

It's over, Nora. They saw the film. (MORE)

ALDEN (CONT'D)

It showed you with the murder weapon.  
You'll never get away.

NORA

I've got a first-class airline ticket  
that says you're wrong.

Nora pours three glasses of wine and sets it in front of them.

NORA (CONT'D)

This occasion calls for a toast.

TARA

I'm not thirsty.

Nora aims the pistol at Janna.

NORA

Drink up or say goodbye to your pretty  
blonde roommate.

Tara drinks the entire glass in one drink.

ALDEN

DON'T!

Janna picks up her glass and drinks it all as well.

NORA

Drink up, Alden.

ALDEN

I know you put something in it.

NORA

DRINK!

ALDEN

No!

She shoots wall near him, and plaster flies off the wall.

NORA

Drink it or I'll kill you all!

ALDEN

You're going to kill us all anyway.

NORA

I said, DRINK IT!

ALDEN

What am I drinking to?

NORA

Our belated third anniversary.

He drinks the entire glass.

NORA (CONT'D)

One glass won't be enough. Have another.

She pours him another glass, and he drinks that too.

ALDEN

There. Now what?

Nora hands Alden a typed note. He looks up at Nora.

ALDEN

This is a confession to the murders.

NORA

Sign it, and put the girls on the bed.

He signs it, picks up Tara, and lays her on the bed.

ALDEN

Your prints are all over this note.

NORA

I wore gloves. It's covered with your prints now. Postmen do the craziest things. It's the nature of the work that attracts psychos, troubled veterans, and shut-ins. Quiet, troubled people, like you.

He puts Janna on the bed next to Tara.

NORA (CONT'D)

Now take their clothes off.

ALDEN

Nora, please. . .why?

NORA

Because that's what a homicidal, suicidal postman would do.

INT. NORA'S APARTMENT



JACKSON

All I found is slinky underwear, chief.

HARRISON

Nice. Okay, let's go wait in the car.

INT. CASCADIA TERRACE APARTMENTS ELEVATOR

Detective Harrison and Detective Jackson go downstairs.

JACKSON

Y'know, that film of Rosetti is thin proof Rosetti killed the Fucinato's.

HARRISON

White didn't kidnap those girls, or kill the kidnapers, or drug the nurse.

INT. JANNA'S AND TARA'S APARTMENT

Alden has stripped the girls to their underwear.

NORA

Now you get undressed, Alden.

ALDEN

NO! I WON'T!

She shoots and it ricochets and breaks one of the windows.

EXT. THE STREET BY THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS

Harrison gets in the car, but Jackson stops when the window breaks.

HARRISON

You getting in?

JACKSON

Did you just hear something?

HARRISON

Probably a cat in a garbage can.

Jackson shuts his door and walks towards the Conquistador Arms.

HARRISON (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

JACKSON

Trusting my instincts.

INT. JANNA'S AND TARA'S APARTMENT

Alden takes off his tee shirt and tosses it on the bed.

ALDEN

You can't kill us and get away with it.

NORA

I'm not going to kill them. You are.

ALDEN

You're insane.

NORA

No; I just don't like untidy endings.

Alden grabs clothes and tosses them at Nora. He runs to a stairwell door, and goes up the stairs. Nora follows, shoots, but misses.

INT. THE LOBBY OF THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS

Jackson enters the hotel and Margie comes from her office.

MARGIE

A tenant just phoned about a gunshot.

Detective Harrison catches up and enters the hotel lobby.

JACKSON

Where did it come from?

MARGIE

In the stairwell!

Jackson and Harrison pull their guns and go toward the stairwell.

MARGIE

Don't kill nobody!

EXT. THE ROOF OF THE CONQUISTADOR ARMS

Alden comes from the stairwell and runs across the dark roof to a large vent and hides. Nora opens the stairwell door.

INT. THE STAIRWELL

Detective Jackson starts up the stairs and Detective Harrison follows, but soon stops to rest. Jackson stops and turns.

JACKSON

You gonna make it?

HARRISON

Yeah, uh. . .I'm just winded. I'll call backup. Keep going, be careful.

EXT. THE ROOF

NORA

You might as well come out, Alden. The game's up. You have ten seconds before I go downstairs and shoot those girls. Ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four. . .

Alden comes to her with his hands up. They walk towards the door, and then move to the side of the door structure when they hear Jackson approaching. Jackson opens the door and when he turns around, Nora shoots him in the chest. He falls and is still.

ALDEN

Nora, no. . .please!

Detective Harrison opens the door and Nora shoots at him. He runs for cover behind a vent. Nora stands behind Alden.

NORA

Throw your gun down detective, or Alden gets it. NOW!

Detective Harrison stands and tosses his gun on the ground.

NORA (CONT'D)

Get over by your partner.

He walks with his hands up to where Jackson is lying.

HARRISON

The police are on their way. Give up and you might come out alive.

NORA

(laughs)

Thanks for the advice.

She shoots Harrison and he falls beside Jackson. Alden grabs her pistol hand. They wrestle to the edge of the roof and Alden trips. Nora points the gun at him, and he closes his eyes.

NORA (CONT'D)

I won't shoot you. Get up! You can jump.

She lifts the gun from his head. Harrison stands and aims at Nora.

HARRISON  
ROSETTI! DROP YOUR GUN!

Nora turns to fire and Harrison shoots. From Alden's POV Nora is backing up, mortally wounded. She steps off the roof. There is no sound for a second, then a scream, and dull thud of her body hitting the sidewalk. Harrison walks up to Alden.

HARRISON  
You okay?

ALDEN  
Yeah. . .no. I thought you were. . .

HARRISON  
My bulletproof vest saved me. But,  
unfortunately, my partner forgot his.

Alden gets up but is unsteady on his feet. Harrison catches him as he passes out and helps him to the ground. We pan past them off the roof and we see the flashing police lights and Nora lying dead on the sidewalk. CLOSE IN on her open eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. A CEMETERY IN FAIRFIELD — MORNING — TWO WEEKS LATER

Nora's friends, post office employees, Janna, Tara, Alden, and Detective Harrison are gathered around Nora's grave. Sunlight breaks through the clouds. Doris and Janna take Alden's hands.

JANNA  
Tara and I have a surprise.  
We bought tickets for the three  
of us to go to Sicily.

ALDEN  
Seriously?

EXT. FAIRFIELD AIRPORT RUNWAY — DAY

A passenger jet takes off.

EXT. VENUS LAKE IN SICILY

Alden films Janna as she comes from the ocean. She wears a bikini and sits on her towel next to him. He shuts off the camera.

JANNA

Didn't you learn your lesson?

ALDEN

What lesson?

JANNA

Don't film women without their permission. It's dangerous. Care for some wine? Tara won't be back for an hour. We're all alone with a bottle of wine.

ALDEN

It sounds very dangerous, Janna.

She leans close and kisses him on the lips.

ALDEN

I'm twenty years older than you.

JANNA

So what? I like you, Alden.

ALDEN

I just need a friend right now.

JANNA

That's cool. So what are your plans when we go back?

ALDEN

Maybe I'll be a filmmaker.

POV behind them showing them silhouetted by the sunset.

ALDEN (CONT'D)

I know two attractive young women who need someone to help them edit their music video. Do you think they'd be interested?

JANNA

I'm sure they could be persuaded.

FADE OUT

THE END