

GRAVE DANGER

Written by

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FADE IN

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

PERFUMERY

Gum-chewing TIFFANY (20s), close to anorexic, but with catwalk looks, sprays a sample of fragrance on the wrist of a prospective CUSTOMER #1.

She surreptitiously checks the time on her smart phone on one side of the counter:

PHONE SCREEN:

The time is close to four-thirty p.m.

RESUME SCENE:

The Customer #1 whiffs her wrist, impressed, examines the label on the sprayer:

"LIBERTAS"

TIFFANY  
It's French.

CUSTOMER #1  
Latin, actually.

A bemused look from Tiffany.

CUSTOMER #1 (CONT'D)  
Roman Goddess of freedom.

Tiffany looks around at her snotty-nosed work environment.

The Customer #1 decides against the perfume, wanders off.

Tiffany stifles a bored sigh. Glances again at her phone.

Her MANAGER lingers nearby, a watchful eye.

EXT. PRISON GARDEN - DAY

Two PRISON GUARDS supervise a motley collection of male PRISONERS at work on garden beds in what is, in effect, a commercial market garden, enclosed within high wire chain-link fencing.

NICK RUEBENS (30-ish), well-fed, well-honed abs, shades of Jim Morrison, busies himself with a long handled hoe in tandem with TOMMY HYDE (mid-30s), gaunt, almost frail.

GUARD #1, a bruiser of a woman, checks her watch, blows a whistle.

FEMALE GUARD

Okay, time gentlemen.

The Prisoners, eager to comply, cease their tasks and, tools in hand, form a single file on a path.

FEMALE GUARD (CONT'D)

And drinks are on our friend  
Ruebens tonight, guys.

A PRISONER #1, at the head of the line calls back to Ruebens, venom in his voice.

PRISONER #1

What strings did ya pull, eh  
Ruebens? Ya sick-o bastard.

Riled, Ruebens brandishes his hoe.

The Female Guard intervenes, ushers Prisoner #1 on his way.

The MALE GUARD calms Ruebens.

MALE GUARD

Don't blow it, Nick.

Hyde looks compassionately at his work partner.

Ruebens acknowledges him with a slight nod, calms himself.

INT. NURSING HOME - DAY

MARIA (20s), short, pretty with Mediterranean features, in beauty salon outfit, propped on an ottoman stool, gives a pedicure to a short ELDERLY MAN, vacant-faced, similar Mediterranean features, seated in a whicker chair.

MARIA

Any of the boys come to visit?

The Elderly Man doesn't respond.

She makes a final touchup with a nail file.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Nah, didn't think so.

She puts on his loafers, packs up her gear in an old style vanity case that has seen better days.

Deflated, she eases herself from the ottoman, places it alongside the single bed.

On the wall above the bedhead, a wooden carved crucifix.

She returns to the Elderly Man, kisses him on the forehead, picks up her vanity case.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Someone will be in later, get you tucked in.

No response.

MARIA (CONT'D)

See you in a few days, then. Okay? Sleep tight.

No response.

Maria slips out of the room without further ado.

INT. PRISON CELL #1 - DAY

All is clean and neat. Ruebens sits on the tidy bunk, towel dries his damp locks. He picks up and reads an opened letter.

RUEBENS

... good with garden tools.

He shakes his head resignedly, as if to say, '*fuck me*', folds the letter, inserts it into its envelope, tosses it on the top of a packed duffle bag nestled on the end of the bunk, leans back against his pillow.

The envelope is addressed to:

MANAGER HIFIELD MEMORIAL TRUST

INT. TIFFANY AND MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gum-chewing Tiffany, in her department store uniform, reclined on the sofa, exhausted.

Maria wanders in from the bathroom, towel around her torso, drying her hair with another.

MARIA

Good day, eh?

TIFFANY  
Need a filthy rich bastard - a  
Bezos or Musk.

WTF from Maria.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
Gotta get outta that dump.

MARIA  
Beggars can't be --

Tiffany sticks out her tongue.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
Does it matter how rich he is, just  
as long as he -- ?

TIFFANY  
Gives you a good home and lot's of  
kids, right?

Maria shrugs ... Her friend has a point.

Tiffany eases from the sofa, heads for the bathroom.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
'Til then.

EXT. POPULAR STRIP - NIGHTCLUB #1 - NIGHT

Prospective CLUBBERS queue along the pavement, wait to enter  
the Nightclub, one of many along the strip.

INT. NIGHT CLUB #1 - NIGHT

Crowded dance floor - young CLUBBERS, loud Dance Music.

Maria, socially awkward, holds a small black clutch bag as  
she dances with BFF Tiffany.

They are approached by a YOUNG MALE, twenty if he's lucky, no  
class nor style. Off his face.

He grinds his groin against Maria's buttocks.

YOUNG MALE  
Fancy a slow hand, sweetie? Or is  
fast and furious more your style?

Maria shuffles away from him, uneasy.

Tiffany intervenes, shoves him away.

TIFFANY

Creep.

The Male puffs his chest out.

Tiffany chews her gum in his face. She appears an inch or two taller than him.

He tries hard to save face as he slinks away and joins a group of PALS.

They all leer at the fragile Maria.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Should be locked up.

Tiffany grabs Maria's hand, drags her away from the scene.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Let's go. Won't be riding with Space-ex tonight.

EXT. PRISON ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

Hyde, forlorn, now with full-on beard, sports duffel bag in hand, walks from the Admin Building, makes his way along the long driveway, past a parking lot, toward ...

EXT. BUSY FOUR-LANE - DAY

A grubby, working-class suburb.

Hyde in jeans and op shop bomber jacket, lingers a few paces behind other disaffected passengers waiting at a Bus Stop.

EXT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Hyde, apprehensive, duffel bag in hand, gently taps the knocker on the front door of the well-kept house in the leafy middle-class suburb.

The door is opened by JOSIE (30s), trim and healthy, dressed in yoga pants, trainers.

She presents well, although her face suggests a few bad years as well as good.

Not overly excited to see Hyde, she ushers him inside anyway.

INT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

HALLWAY

Josie takes Hyde's duffel bag.

JOSIE  
 Forgot it was today. Should've  
 phoned me. Could've picked you up.

HYDE  
 Didn't want to put you out.

JOSIE  
 No?

HYDE  
 (fawns, reaches for bag)  
 Forget it. I'll --

Josie dismisses the appeal and heads along the Hallway.

Hyde follows like a petulant child to a ...

SPARE ROOM

Very little in the way of furniture.

Josie tosses the duffel bag on a small bed - not much bigger  
 than a child's cot.

She picks up a cardboard archive box, places it on top of a  
 file cabinet in one corner by the sash window, opens the  
 white plantation shutters to lighten the room.

HYDE (CONT'D)  
 One cell to another.

JOSIE  
 You got the run of the house.

HYDE  
 There's that, I suppose.

Hyde flops his buttocks on the bed. It creaks even with his  
 light frame.

JOSIE  
 Except you know where.

Hyde nods, understood.

She assesses his scrawny beard.

JOSIE (CONT'D)  
Not a good look, Tommy.

He shrugs indifference.

PRE-LAP:

The WHISTLE of an electric kettle fades in the background.

INT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

CHILD'S BEDROOM

Hyde stares through the doorway to the neat and tidy bedroom, peers in at two small beds, small rocking horse in a corner. A small computer sits atop a study desk.

Josie sidles up with two cups of coffee. Hands one to Hyde, pulls the door closed. A deliberate act.

A pained look comes over Hyde.

He holds up a hand, as much in defense as in acceptance.

JOSIE  
Any way, they're with Allan and Raynie. Thought it best.

Silence.

They move into ...

LOUNGE ROOM

Josie sinks into a modular sofa, leaves Hyde standing.

JOSIE (CONT'D)  
So how long this time?

HYDE  
I'm not going back.  
(off her cynical look)  
I'm not.

JOSIE  
Toe the line and you won't.

EXT. POPULAR STRIP - NIGHTCLUB #2 - NIGHT

Late night revelers on the busy strip. Autos cruising.

Hyde wanders aimlessly along the sidewalk, sidesteps the usual suspects looking to score whatever, drugs, flesh, aggro.

He passes the entrance to the club, assesses the queue.

Nothing for him here. He strolls along, disinterested.

EXT. SLEEZY CITY LANEWAY - NIGHT

A group of THUGS linger near a stainless steel public toilet kiosk covered with graffiti, watch proceedings.

Hyde approaches and chats up a TEENAGE MALE.

After the briefest conversation, the teenager wanders off through the gross nightlife crowd, leaves Hyde despondent.

EXT. PARK - NIGHT

Alone, on his back and worse for wear, Hyde stirs, picks himself up from the damp grass, rubs the back of his neck.

He searches his pockets - empty, shakes his head in self-pity.

He wanders across an open playing field, high-rises in the distance, comes to the perimeter of bushes and tall trees.

He skirts the copse, checks under the canopy of a drooping tree - it's vacant.

EXT. PARK - DAY (SUNRISE)

The rising sun peeks in, light penetrates through the leaves of an old tree, its branches drooped low to touch the ground.

The light irritates Hyde's eyes. He stirs in what is a makeshift, but comfortable enough cubby space. He unabashedly takes a piss where he stands.

EXT/INT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

A Volkswagen Golf enters the driveway lined with manicured rose bushes, pulls to a halt alongside the house.

Josie exits, lifts the hatch, removes a couple shopping bags, lugs them to the stoop ...

... where she encounters Hyde nestled behind a huge potted plant that shields the view from the street.

He stirs, a sorry sight.

JOSIE

Up to your old tricks?

HYDE

I ran out of money. Couldn't get a cab that would take me on credit.

She deposits the shopping bags on the stoop, brushes past him, opens the door.

JOSIE

And the key I gave you?

He shrugs, cowers before her.

She gives a pitiful shake of her head, unlocks the front door, picks up one of the bags, enters the house.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

Looked at yourself lately?

He takes the hint, takes the other bag inside, vigorously scratches the full-on growth on his face.

INT. SLEEZE HOTEL - NIGHT

Hyde, now clean-shaven, meanders aimlessly among the CROWD of mostly deadbeats.

He ambles up to a body with generous black locks and a nice ass, propped up at the bar, chatting with a painted-up WOMAN.

He gathers courage, pinches the nice ass.

Ruebens turns around, pleased and aggro at the same time.

RUEBENS

Cunt.

(registers Hyde)

Fuck me. The gardening guru. You're out?

Hyde loosens a little, pleased that he's been acknowledged.

HYDE

Period. What about you? Still on parole?

RUEBENS

Yeah. Another month.

The Painted Woman stiffens at the word 'parole'.

HYDE

In other words, you shouldn't be here.

Ruebens gives the Painted Woman a leery glance.

RUEBENS

Why not? Need a balanced diet. You know what they say. Can't live on just bread alone.

The Painted Woman steps back from the bar.

PAINTED WOMAN

Gotta go to the ladies.

Ruebens leers after her.

She joins a few bodies of indeterminate gender heading toward a REST ROOM sign.

He calls after her ...

RUEBENS

In a woman, out a man.

He gives Hyde serious scrutiny.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

You look like you could do with a bit more than plain ol' bread.

He holds up a set of car keys, impresses Hyde.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Let's go.

EXT/INT. POPULAR STRIP - CAR TRAVELING - NIGHT

Busy with late night revelers. Autos cruise the strip.

Hyde rides shotgun to Ruebens driving a 2010 silver-gray Chevrolet Impala.

Raucous Rap Music blares from its audio, competes with the CACOPHONY from the other cars, motor bikes, Clubs spruiking their delights over PAs.

They cruise the strip, Ruebens eyes off the various women.

RUEBENS

At least they got me a job.  
Supposed to be a curator but all I  
do is dig holes. Shit pay, but at  
least it's paid for the wheels.

Hyde runs his hand along the cracked, fraying dash partly repaired with black gaffer tape.

The audio crackles. Ruebens thumps the unit. It corrects itself.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Piece of shit, I know.

Hyde shrugs.

HYDE

Done better than me.

RUEBENS

So where're you staying?

HYDE

Got a sister put me up for a few  
days.

RUEBENS

Where at?

HYDE

Eastern suburbs.

Ruebens is impressed.

HYDE (CONT'D)

Not sure I'm welcome, though.

Ruebens shrugs, non-committal.

He glances off to some activity on the opposite sidewalk.

RUEBENS

Let's give some women the time of  
their life.

He pulls to a halt, double ranks, turns the volume on the audio right down.

HYDE

You been inside too long. Lost your touch.

Ruebens exits the car, leans back in through the window to address Hyde.

RUEBENS

Twenty bucks says otherwise. Take the wheel.

Hyde shuffles awkwardly over the console, agitated by the tooting of Car Horns behind.

He inches the car forward ... to a laneway entrance, parks.

Ruebens arrives with Tiffany and Maria in tow.

Ruebens gets in the back with Tiffany, leaves Maria to find her place alongside Hyde in the front passenger.

Tiffany sits on something uncomfortable.

She eases off the unseen object, tosses it in the footwell.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

(to Hyde)

Pay me when you get a job.

EXT. FOOTHILLS OVERLOOK - NIGHT

The Impala pulls up in a secluded spot, well away from the well-lit tourist parking lot.

The expanse of city lights below sparkle between the foliage of the trees and bushes.

Hyde and Maria sit passively in the front, smile awkwardly at the sound of Ruebens and Tiffany getting it off in the back.

HYDE

Wanna go for a walk?

Maria wastes no time, exits the car and waits for Hyde.

They make their way to a fallen log, sit and stare at the city lights. He pulls a used handkerchief from his jeans pocket, wipes his nose.

MARIA

Hypnotic, eh?

A bemused look from Hyde.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
The lights.

Hyde nods.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
So, where's work?

He's uncomfortable with this ... what to say?

HYDE  
Not at the moment. Was in transport  
for a while. Bus driver.

Maria waits elaboration.

HYDE (CONT'D)  
School bus. But ... they made me  
redundant.

MARIA  
Thought you'd be in demand.

Hyde shrugs, dismissing her concern.

HYDE  
Yeah, well. But I'm hoping to get a  
job with my pal, as a ... as an  
excavation manager.  
(before Maria can query)  
Yourself?

MARIA  
Finished a course in beauty and  
make-up. Want to get into  
television one day. But for the  
time being, I'm stuck with the  
grubby stuff.

She cocks her head in the direction of the Impala.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
He your friend?

HYDE  
Yeah, from --

He's reluctant to elaborate.

HYDE (CONT'D)  
We were market gardeners together  
for a short while.

MARIA  
You don't look Mexican.

The inference is lost on him.

A moment to reflect.

Maria gestures toward the Impala.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
He's really good looking.

Hyde hikes his shoulders.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Didn't mean it that way.

The Impala steadily rocks.

HYDE  
There goes my twenty.

This is a little obtuse to Maria.

TIFFANY (O.S.)  
Stop it. No.

Maria's bemusement is quickly replaced by concern.

TIFFANY (O.S.) (CONT'D)  
I said NO.

The Impala rocks more vigorously, steadies.

Tiffany bursts free of the vehicle, leans over and, unseen by Maria or Hyde, removes something from her neck, tosses it on the back seat.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
He's off his tree.

She breaks down, sobs feverishly, massages her neck.

Maria rushes to her, comforts her, leads her away.

MARIA  
I thought you liked --

Ruebens exits the other back door, breathing exaggerated, open jeans half-way down his hips.

Maria shelters Tiffany, turns to Hyde. He takes the hint, goes to Ruebens.

HYDE  
Get in the front.

Ruebens calms down, adjusts his jeans, complies.

Maria waves her phone, as she drags Tiffany from the area.

MARIA  
Call a taxi?

Hyde intervenes, hands up in a surrender gesture.

HYDE  
It's okay. Sorry. Seriously. It's just that he's had some ... He must have had some sort of episode. Get in. I'll get you back to town.

But the two women back away.

HYDE (CONT'D)  
Safe and sound. Promise.

He crosses his heart.

An impasse.

The women tentatively return to the back of the car.

Maria enters, brushes a length of sash rope from the seat into the footwell, out of sight.

Tiffany remains at the open doorway, reluctant to proceed further.

Maria extends a reassuring hand, slowly draws Tiffany in alongside, her grip firm.

HYDE (CONT'D)  
(aside to Ruebens)  
We're even.

INT. TIFFANY AND MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LIVING AREA

Tiffany shaking, leans against the kitchen bench, manages to down a full glass of white wine without spilling any.

She pours another from a three-liter cask on the bench, flops herself on to the Ikea-type sofa.

Non-plussed, Maria pours herself a small, sociable glass, joins Tiffany on the sofa.

MARIA

So, gonna tell me one day?

Tiffany fights back tears, reluctant to discuss.

TIFFANY

You don't wanna know.

But Maria is all ears.

Tiffany reiterates.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

You don't. Believe me.

EXT/INT. STREET #1 - MEN'S SHELTER - NIGHT

The Impala cruises into a NO PARKING zone in front of the entrance to a Men's Shelter, secured behind a wrought iron gate, in darkness except for an exterior security light.

The sign on the door is explicit:

DOORS CLOSED 11:00 PM STRICTLY NO  
LATE ADMITTANCE - FOR EMERGENCIES  
PHONE BLUELIFE 132236

Hyde non-plussed.

Ruebens heaves a sigh, brightens ...

RUEBENS

All good.

The Impala pulls away.

EXT. STREET #2 - APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Ruebens presses one of several buttons on an intercom panel alongside an iron entry gate.

No answer.

He turns, reassures Hyde by his side.

RUEBENS

She's good. Pals from before I went inside.

Presses the button again.

A blasé voice answers through the intercom.

DINAH (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
You got an appointment? I don't  
start until --

RUEBENS  
It's Nick.

DINAH (V.O.)  
Who?

RUEBENS  
Nick. Nick Ruebens. Been away for a  
while.

DINAH (V.O.)  
Away, as in --?

RUEBENS  
On parole. So I gotta be a good  
boy.

DINAH (V.O.)  
But in the meantime ...

RUEBENS  
Nah. Just a social visit.

DINAH (V.O.)  
Social, eh?

RUEBEN  
What do you say?

The night goes silent ...

DINAH (V.O.)  
Take the elevator to the second  
floor --

RUEBENS  
Third on the right, if my memory's  
correct.

The entrance gate clicks. Ruebens winks to Hyde, enters.

Hyde is reticent ... follows Ruebens' beckoning.

INT. DINAH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

DINAH (40s), in silky robe, partly made-up in prep for a work night, opens her apartment door to Ruebens, assesses him.

DINAH  
Haven't changed.

RUEBENS  
Hair's a bit longer.

DINAH  
You know what I mean.

Hyde cowers in the corridor behind Ruebens.

DINAH (CONT'D)  
Who's the punter?

Ruebens takes a small side step to reveal Hyde.

RUEBENS  
Tommy. Tommy Hyde. Good pal.  
We stayed out too late. Missed the  
curfew. They lock the door at --

DINAH  
And you need a --

Ruebens brashly steps over the threshold.

RUEBENS  
Just for the night.

DINAH  
Sorry, Nick. Not tonight. I got  
clients in a while.

RUEBENS  
Not tonight?

Dinah offers a salacious smile - not *tonight*.

Ruebens returns the smile, addresses Hyde.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
Raincheck, maybe?

EXT. STREET ON EDGE OF PARK - EARLY MORNING

The Impala, windows fogged, parked beneath trees on the park's perimeter.

EXT. STREET #1 - MEN'S SHELTER - MORNING

The Impala pulls up in the NO PARKING zone out the front of the men's Shelter.

Hyde slinks from the passenger door, onto the sidewalk.

Ruebens, behind the wheel, motions toward the Centre.

RUEBENS

Grab yourself some breakfast.

(dangles some keys)

I gotta go open up. Put in a word.

Hyde nods, uneasy about his circumstances.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Be back here about four-thirty. You good to pick up your gear?

The Impala pulls from the curb as a Police Cruiser casually rolls by.

Hyde is unnerved by the sight of the Police.

Hands in pockets, forlorn, he lingers on the fringe of a small group of bedraggled HOMELESS MEN of various ages.

INT/EXT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

On the stoop, Hyde, freshened up, sports duffel bag in hand, turns back to Josie still in the hallway, a resigned look on her face.

HYDE

Sorry about the key. You look after those kids.

With that, he ambles down the driveway, to the street.

INT. MEN'S SHELTER - EVENING

MESS HALL

The Homeless Men, mostly clean shaven and respectable, enjoy a hot meal at a long trestle table.

Among them, Ruebens and Hyde.

RUEBENS

They'll take your boots out of your first pays.

(MORE)

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

We can stay here for a few more days 'til we find our own place. Got the feelers out.

Hyde nods agreeably.

HYDE

So, we'll be a team then?

RUEBENS

Uh-huh.

HYDE

We should celebrate.

Ruebens' eyes light up.

EXT/INT. POPULAR STRIP - IMPALA TRAVELING - NIGHT

Ruebens' eyes are alert, scanning.

He and Hyde again cruise the strip in the Impala.

Ruebens nudges Hyde.

RUEBENS

Talk about gluttons for punishment.

Hyde looks off through the car window ...

EXT. POPULAR STRIP - NIGHT

Busy sidewalk outside a bar. Tiffany converses with Maria (MOS), the slinky strap of a pink compact clutch bag over her shoulder.

An awkward scenario.

Maria feigns a smile, nods.

Tiffany shows concern, but Maria is adamant.

RUEBENS (V.O.)

C'mon. In for a penny.

Nearby, a teenage STUD awaits the outcome.

Tiffany places a hand on Maria's shoulder, who forces an smile.

Arm in arm, Tiffany and the young Stud, walk off together ...

... Maria wanders a short distance along the strip ...

... joins the end of a long queue at a nearby taxi rank, waits impatiently.

No taxis in sight.

RUEBENS (V.O.)  
Double or nothing?

Maria removes her phone from her clutch bag, opens the screen.

RESUME IMPALA TRAVELING

Ruebens pulls the Impala part way into a LOADING ZONE, jumps out, leaves Hyde to watch intently.

Within seconds Ruebens escorts Maria to the car, motions for Hyde to take the wheel, while the couple get in the back.

The Impala edges out of the loading zone, back into the stream of traffic.

Hyde turns his head, addresses Maria as he sneers at Ruebens.

HYDE  
Where's your friend? She run off  
with some rich guy, leave you all  
by your lonesome?

A sore point for Maria.

RUEBENS  
Bit of a tease, that one, eh Maria?

MARIA  
Could say that.

RUEBENS  
What about you?

She smiles alluringly.

MARIA  
I'm Catholic.

Hyde mockingly crosses himself as he follows the conversation via the rear view mirror.

RUEBENS

Tommy, old pal, think we should  
give Maria's house-mate some time  
with her new sugar-daddy.

EXT. IMPALA TRAVELING - NIGHT

The Impala cruises negotiates the narrow road that snakes its  
way into the foothills.

RUEBENS (O.S.)

Not fair your friend should have  
all the fun. What d'you say?

MARIA (O.S.)

What did you have in mind?

RUEBENS (O.S.)

Did your friend not tell you?

EXT. FOOTHILLS OVERLOOK - NIGHT

The Impala pulls up in the secluded spot, well away from the  
well-lit tourist parking lot.

Lights of the city below sparkle between the trees.

Hyde gets out and wanders off, kicks at loose stones. He  
settles on the log in his little spot in the bushes, alone  
with his thoughts.

He looks back at the Impala - everything seems quiet.

He gets up, lifts a collar against the chill, walks towards a  
tree, hand on his fly zip, as if about to take a piss.

From seemingly nowhere, lights from another vehicle  
momentarily illuminate the area.

Hyde slinks behind the tree trunk, out of sight.

A Police Cruiser pulls up at the rear of the Impala.

A beam from a torch shines from the Cruiser's passenger  
window through the Impala's back window.

Hyde's concerned look dissipates.

The Cruiser coasts away.

Still no activity in the Impala.

Out of sight behind the tree, Hyde starts to masturbate ...

Ruebens bursts from the car, frazzled, SLAMS the door shut.

Hyde, non-plussed, zips up, rushes to the catatonic Ruebens, slumped against the car, open jeans half-way down his thighs.

Hyde looks inside the Impala, at the lifeless body of Maria on the back seat. Around her neck is a choker noose fashioned from sash rope.

He backs away a pace or two, unsure how to handle the situation.

RUEBENS

Said she was up for it. She was enjoying it. Then she just ...

Hyde stands dumbfounded.

Ruebens snaps out of it, adjusts his jeans, grabs hold of Hyde's shoulder.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Give me a hand.

Hyde stands frozen, aghast.

Ruebens goes to the driver's side, flips the trunk lever.

He returns to the back seat, leans over, removes the rope from Maria's neck, tosses it on the seat, tries single-handedly to remove her awkwardly positioned body.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Are you with me or not?

Hyde stands frozen.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Well?

Reluctantly, Hyde complies.

Together they shuffle the body to the trunk and dump her on top of a collection of shovels and spades.

Ruebens slams the trunk, gathers his wits.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Might have to start your new job a little earlier than expected.

The comment is too obtuse for the dumbfounded Hyde.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - NIGHT

A sign reads: NO PUBLIC ACCESS

The Impala approaches a gateway to a service entrance.

The car stops, its headlights are doused.

Ruebens hops out from the driver's seat, fumbles with a collection of keys, unlocks the padlock on the gate, returns, drives the car through.

The car crawls along the service road, past a few sheds, piles of earth, compost, digging machinery equipment ...

It comes to a halt by an expanse of lawn.

Ruebens pulls the trunk lever, exits the car.

He has to coax Hyde.

RUEBENS

We're a team, remember? The trunk.

Ruebens raises the trunk lid high, maneuvers Maria's body, removes the shovels.

Hyde sidles to him, accepts the shovel offered.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Just up here.

Hyde follows Ruebens across the lawned avenue of headstones to the site of a recent burial, the mounded earth barely visible in the meager light of the night sky.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Wonder if she had funeral benefits?

Ruebens starts shoveling away the mound of earth.

Hyde reluctantly joins in.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - DAWN

GRAVE-SITE #1

The new day dawns over the not-so-neat mound of earth from the night before, splatters of soil littered on the surrounding ground.

INT. TIFFANY AND MARIA'S APARTMENT - MORNING

TIFFANY'S BEDROOM

Bedclothes strewn everywhere - a messy room. Tiffany, bedraggled, shuffles from her bedroom doorway into ...

KITCHEN

Tiffany switches on the electric kettle, goes to ...

BATHROOM

Tiffany opens the door. It has not been used, no evidence of shower water.

She goes to ...

MARIA'S BEDROOM

Knocks. No answer. Knocks again, louder. No answer. Takes a peek inside.

The bed is made, unruffled. She returns to ...

KITCHEN

Grabs her cell phone, mumbles as she composes a text:

CHYRON of Tiffany's text: "killa nite? mine ws messy vgn!!"

She sends the message, turns to the now boiling kettle, makes a mug of instant coffee from a jar, adds two sugars and milk.

She opens her pack of gum, starts chewing. Breakfast.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - DAY

GRAVE-SITE #2

The OPERATOR of a backhoe excavator about the size of a mini Bobcat unit prepares a new grave-site, dumps the load in a pile to one side.

Ruebens, in hi-vis vest over a singlet, trim jeans, and safety boots, shovels up loose dirt that spills from the bucket on to the pile.

Hyde, hi-vis vest over denim shirt, ill-fitting jeans and new boots, casually tidies up the left-overs with a stiff broom.

The SUPERVISOR paces over to them, addresses Hyde.

SUPERVISOR  
Settlin' in?

Hyde nods, goes more spritely about his task.

The Supervisor turns to Ruebens, nods to the excavator.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)  
What d'ya reckon?

RUEBENS  
'Bout what?

SUPERVISOR  
Thinking of puttin' you on higher duties.

Ruebens is bemused.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)  
Comes with a pay rise.

Hydes digs Ruebens in the ribs. Rubens responds: *Why not?*

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)  
We'll see how we go. But right now I need y'all both over on Row G-Three. The one you did the other day. Fuckin' vandals in again last night, left a fuckin' mess. Cameras still on the blink.

Ruebens and Hyde nervously eye each other at this revelation, mouth: '*cameras*'?.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)  
Anyway, Row G-3.

Ruebens and Hyde hastily pick up their tools and trudge off , leave the excavator Operator to his own devices.

HYDE  
(hisses)  
Cameras!

Reubens dismisses the concern with a cheeky smile.

RUEBENS  
On the blink.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

PERFUMERY

Tiffany hands over a small wrapped purchase to a female Customer #2, with the obligatory "Thank you"s.

The only other Customer #3 in this particular perfume department is attended by another SALES CLERK.

Tiffany resumes her gum chewing, takes her cell phone from her bag beneath the counter, deftly punches in a text, returns the phone to her bag.

Mumbles to herself

TIFFANY

Trust you used the rubber.

Her Manager approaches.

Tiffany ceases her gum chewing, grabs a feather duster, proceeds to dust down the counter and displays of perfumes.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - DAY

GRAVE-SITE #1

Ruebens leans on his shovel as Hyde sweeps the surrounding loose soil on to the mound of the recent burial.

Hyde recoils a step - disturbed.

HYDE

What the fuck.

What appears to be a finger pokes through the messed up mound of soil.

Ruebens ambles up to the protruding object, tugs on it, much to Hyde's consternation.

Ruebens pulls harder.

RUEBENS

Wakey, wakey.

He bursts into laughter.

It's a tuber of some sort, from one of the flowers that grow in between the rows of headstones.

He waves it in front of Hyde's nose, taunting him.

Hyde whacks it from Ruebens' hand ...

... they both break down with laughter.

SUPERVISOR (O.S.)  
Haven't got time for that.

Ruebens and Hyde both freeze momentarily.

The Supervisor arrives on the scene.

RUEBENS  
Sorry boss.

They both resume cleaning up the mound of soil.

SUPERVISOR  
All good. Forgot to mention back there. Got a call back from an associate of mine. Pulled a few strings. Got an apartment gonna be demolished in a few months for some fancy condos.

Ruebens eyes off Hyde who stops work, leans on the broom handle.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)  
Bit of a dump, only one bedroom. Semi-furnished, a sofa and whatever. But if you're interested.

RUEBENS  
How much?

SUPERVISOR  
Three hundred a week. Power and water are still on. Part of the rent. With ya promotion, ya should be able to afford that.

Ruebens nods spontaneously.

It's infectious, and Hyde follows suit.

INT. TIFFANY AND MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tiffany trudges through the front door. Another day at the perfumery.

She calls out.

TIFFANY

Home.

Goes straight to kitchen. Clean, except for Tiffany's used coffee mug from the morning still on the bench.

Goes to Maria's bedroom, knocks. No answer. Peeks inside.

Withdraws, her brow furrowed.

She returns to the kitchen, opens a cupboard, removes a sachet of soup, empties contents into a mug, switches on the electric kettle.

INT. IMPALA TRAVELING - NIGHT

The Impala, driven by Ruebens, cruises a dimly lit street in a welfare housing district.

Hyde follows directions on a maps app on Reubens' cell phone.

HYDE

Few more blocks along this road.

INT. TIFFANY AND MARIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LIVING AREA

Tiffany, on the sofa, stirs from a nap. Looks around. No sign of Maria. She calls.

TIFFANY

Em.

No response. Intrigued, she goes again to Maria's bedroom, knocks. No answer. Peeks inside.

Withdraws, serious concern.

She returns to the kitchen, takes her phone from the charger on the bench, punches in a number.

EXT/INT. IMPALA TRAVELING - NIGHT

The MUFFLED RING of a cell phone emanates from somewhere in the moving car.

Ruebens and Hyde stare at each other, bemused.

The Ringing persists.

Hyde searches his side of the car, fiddles around under the passenger seat ...

... locates a thin strap, drags out a pink clutch bag, the source of the sound, removes a cell phone.

Ruebens glares at it.

RUEBENS

Toss it.

HYDE

Where?

RUEBENS

Any fuckin' where.

Hyde returns the phone to the bag, lowers the passenger window, waits until the car passes the dull street light, tosses it on the sidewalk.

EXT. STREET #3 - SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX - NIGHT

The clutch bag lands at the base of a scraggly hedge that abuts the sidewalk.

The muffled RING continues.

EXT. APRTMENT BLOCK - IMPALA - NIGHT - LATER

The Impala turns into the driveway of a 1960s-era two-storey block of six apartments, three down, three up, built from bland cinder blocks. More like a cheap motel.

Ruebens, in the driver's seat, leans from the window, squints his eyes to read the address on the low brick wall housing four mail boxes.

The Impala continues along the driveway ...

... past a graffiti adorned sign "TENANTS CARS ONLY" ...

... to a vacant car park at the rear of the block.

EXT. STREET #3 - SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX - NIGHT

The muffled distinctive PING of an incoming text message, issues from Maria's clutch bag, snug at the base of the hedge.

## INT. RUEBENS AND HYDE APARTMENT - NIGHT

## LOUNGE ROOM

Ruebens, with a backpack and duffel bag, and Hyde with his sports duffel bag, stand in the sparsely furnished lounge.

A well-worn sofa, a small flat-screen television on a low Ikea type coffee table, a basic round cane table and two chairs for meals.

Ruebens lowers his duffel bag to the threadbare rug, moves to a doorway, peaks inside.

## BATHROOM

Partially tiled, with shower-head over a three-quarter size acrylic bath that's seen better days.

Alongside the bath, a 60s-style toilet in need of a clean, a near-depleted roll of toilet tissue on top of the cistern.

Ruebens enters, slumps off his backpack, removes a plastic bag of toiletries, wipes dust from the glass shelf above the pedestal vanity bowl, deposits his toiletries on top, exits.

## LOUNGE ROOM

Hyde stands idle, still holding his sports bag, as if waiting for instructions.

Ruebens goes to another door, opens it to full view - the bedroom.

RUEBENS

Toss ya for it.

Hyde shrugs his shoulders, a slight shake of the head as he flops his bag on the sofa.

HYDE

I'm good.

Ruebens doesn't enter any debate. Takes his gear into

## THE BEDROOM

A double bed, a couple blankets roughly folded on the foot of the bare mattress. Two sweat-stained pillows, sans linen.

Ruebens tosses his gear on the mattress, returns to the

LOUNGE ROOM

RUEBENS

We need some things. Toilet paper  
for one. You wanna come?

Hyde declines with a shake of the head, sits on the sofa.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Suit yourself. You can fix me up  
later. Back soon.

Hyde manages an affable smile as Ruebens departs.

He picks up a remote control unit from the sofa, fiddles with  
it, the television fires up.

He settles into the sofa, channel surfs, eyes heavy.

INT. SEVEN-ELEVEN DELI - NIGHT

Ruebens at the check-out with a variety of groceries,  
including a six-pack of generic toilet paper, bottle of  
bathroom cleaning agent, brush.

The middle-aged male CHECKOUT CLERK assists Ruebens pack the  
items into plastic bags, turns to the register.

CHECKOUT CLERK

And twenty cents for the bags,  
sorry.

Ruebens looks bemused.

CHECKOUT CLERK (CONT'D)

You been living under a mushroom or  
something? Law's changed. You know,  
environment and all that stuff?

Ruebens shrugs, no worries. He offers cash.

The transaction completed, Ruebens grabs the bags and checks  
out the next customer in line, a sweet YOUNG FEMALE, the only  
other person in the store.

He gives her a salacious smile.

She blushes, places her cream and bread on the counter ...

... chances a surreptitious glance at Ruebens strutting out.

EXT/INT. PARKING LOT - IMPALA - NIGHT

Ruebens in the Impala in the parking lot, a short distance from the entrance to the deli.

Ruebens ogles the sweet Young Female as she exits. She darts him a flirtatious smile.

But he glowers when she gets into a Lexus, alongside the male DRIVER (30-ish), suave, confident, high achiever-type.

The Lexus exits the parking lot.

Ruebens follows, cruises behind ... the Lexus speeds off into the night.

Pissed, Ruebens eases off, drums his fingers on the steering wheel, does a U-turn.

EXT. APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

Ruebens presses one of numerous buttons on an intercom alongside the iron entry gate. Waits impatiently.

DINAH (V.O.)  
(filtered through  
intercom)  
I'm not working tonight.

Ruebens' lascivious face glows.

RUEBENS  
Good to know. It's me, Nick. By  
myself. If you're good for it.

The intercom clicks off. The gate clicks open.

INT. RUEBENS AND HYDE APARTMENT - LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

LATER

The front door to the apartment slowly opens.

Ruebens, a vacant look about him, quietly enters, closes the door behind him, leans against it.

The lights are on.

Hyde asleep on the sofa, television on.

Ruebens kicks the end of the sofa, wakes Hyde.

RUEBENS

Sorry man.

Hyde stirs, gets his bearings.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Need a hand.

HYDE

Christ, how much did you buy?

But there is no shopping.

Ruebens, catatonic, stares back at Hyde.

RUEBENS

She ... It just happened. Sorry.

HYDE

She ...?

RUEBENS

The one who kicked us out.

Hyde drops his face into his cupped hands.

Ruebens wanders over, flops on the sofa next to him.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

It's not that I mean to do it. They  
all seem to enjoy it, but then --

Hyde shakes his head piteously, a nervous wreck ...

He stands abruptly, mind made up.

HYDE

No way. Count me out. I'm not part  
of this.

He gathers some of his belongings into his duffle bag.

RUEBENS

So where're you gonna go? Sister's?  
Park? Too late for the shelter.

He gestures around the apartment.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

In for a penny.

He stands, sidles up to Hyde, caresses his arm.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
A team, remember?

Hyde acquiesces, drops his head upon Ruebens' shoulder, like a partner penitent over a lovers' spat.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - NIGHT

In the darkness, Ruebens in the driver's seat of the Impala, head slumped back on the head rest, eyes vacant.

GRAVE-SITE #3

Just beyond the car, Hyde uses a shovel to pat down the last of the soil on the mound of a newly filled grave.

He wanders over to the car, tosses the shovel into the trunk, slams the lid shut, leans against it, emotionally depleted.

He gathers his wits, gets in the passenger seat.

A silent night.

Hyde pulls from his jeans back pocket a long silk scarf tied as a noose, tosses it to Ruebens.

HYDE  
Souvenir.

EXT. STREET #3 - SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX- DAY

An ELDERLY WOMAN, something of a crone, shuffles with the aid of a walking stick along the sidewalk in front of an unkempt pair of side-by-side duplexes.

She stops by the low hedge in need of a haircut, in effect the front fence, sprawling out over the sidewalk.

She looks about her - no witnesses.

She steadies herself, up-ends her walking stick, and hooks up the pink clutch bag by its partially visible thin strap.

Again checks her surroundings.

She slips the bag inside her cardigan, shuffles along nonchalantly.

INT. SIDE-BY-SIDE DUPLEX - DAY

KITCHEN

At the bench beside a tarnished stainless steel sink, the Elderly Woman flicks on an electric kettle, spoons some instant coffee into a mug, moves into an adjacent...

DINING/LOUNGE AREA

A senior retiree's abode, crammed with knick-knacks, mementos, photos of late husband, grubby grandkids.

She settles in her arm chair that's covered with a crochet blanket, goes through the clutch bag.

No money. Small make-up compact, something resembling a hair brush, an unopened condom sachet.

A brief examination of the fancy, latest model, pink cell phone. Nothing here of use to her.

The boiling kettle HISSES in the background.

She places the bag on the coffee table beside the lounge chair, struggles to stand and shuffles back to the kitchen.

As she fumbles her way into the kitchen, the pink phone sounds a distinctive PING.

INT. POLICE STATION #1 - DAY

On the Front Desk, young DUTY OFFICER pushes a domed call bell to one side, away from the Elderly woman's reach, resumes examining the contents of the pink clutch bag.

ELDERLY WOMAN

No reward, no nothin'?

DUTY OFFICER #1

Sorry lady. It's just a bag with a phone. Get 'em all the time. But we'll take your details. If the owner turns up, she might give you something for your effort.

The Elderly Woman huffs, miffed.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Wasn't even any money inside. Don't know how she managed to buy things.

The Duty Officer #1 holds up the pink phone.

The Elderly Woman mumbles, shuffles out with her cane.

The Duty Officer #1 shrugs, returns the pink phone to the bag, leans down below the desk and places it in a plastic crate with other miscellany that's been handed in.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - DAY

The mini backhoe excavator jiggles the earth, scrapes, lifts soil, swings it to one side, deposits it - not a very delicate operation.

In the driver seat, Ruebens fumbles with the controls.

The regular Operator and the cemetery ground Supervisor oversee proceedings.

SUPERVISOR

Relax. Pretend she's a woman. Treat her right, she'll do what you want.

Standing beside the makings of this new grave, Hyde bursts into laughter as he scrapes and shovels the spilled earth into a pile.

RUEBENS

(to Hyde)

Don't laugh, prick. Your record's not all that good in that department. Certainly not with grown ones, anyway.

Hyde flips him the bird.

HYDE

Yeah but at least mine all live to tell the tale.

Ruebens stares daggers, fiddles the controls, starts to swing the bucket towards Hyde, unable to disguise his displeasure at the comment.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

A stressed-out Tiffany, phone in hand, approaches the DUTY OFFICER #2, close to retirement age, whose demeanor suggests he'd rather be some place more salubrious at this hour.

DUTY OFFICER #2

Yes, young lady?

He waits patiently while Tiffany presses the SEND button on her phone, eventually states her business.

TIFFANY

I want to report a missing person.

DUTY OFFICER #2

And your connection is ...?

TIFFANY

We're like partners.

DUTY OFFICER #2

Partners, eh? Perhaps he's just out playing up?

The DISTINCTIVE PING of an incoming text sounds from somewhere under the front counter.

TIFFANY

She.

DUTY OFFICER #2

I see.

Tiffany rolls her eyes, *whatever*.

TIFFANY

We share an apartment. She hasn't come home since the night before last and she's not been answering her phone.

DUTY OFFICER #2

Like I said --

TIFFANY

Been trying all day and all night --

DUTY OFFICER #2

Maybe she got lucky.

TIFFANY

Maria's not like that.

DUTY OFFICER #2

Maria?

A DISTINCTIVE PING reminder of an unread text is heard somewhere under the front counter.

Tiffany looks at her own phone, stares down the Officer.

Piqued, the Duty Officer #2 rummages in a crate below the counter, pulls out the clutch bag, removes the phone.

The lighted screen on the phone, still visible, slowly fades.

TIFFANY

That's it. Her phone. So what the fuck's it doing here?

Duty Officer #2 places the phone on the counter top.

DUTY OFFICER #2

Handed in. Lost property.

Tiffany goes to grab the phone but she's not quick enough, and the Duty Officer snatches it up.

DUTY OFFICER #2 (CONT'D)

Sorry, young lady. But only the owner ... or someone authorized ... can take possession.

TIFFANY

I fuckin' told you, we share an apartment.

DUTY OFFICER #2

Like I said, only someone who's authorised.

TIFFANY

I know her pass code, for fuck's sake.

She realises he's not going to budge.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Look, she's not been seen, she obviously can't answer her phone, which means something has happened to her. For all we know, she could be in grave danger.

Duty Officer #2 raises a calming hand.

DUTY OFFICER #2

Maybe she just lost it. During her night out.

TIFFANY

There are other ways she could have contacted me. Surely the fact that she didn't ... and that she hasn't been home --

Another raised hand to placate her. He reaches for the desk phone, buzzes ... the call is answered.

CZJENOWSKI (V.O.)  
(filtered)  
Czjenowski.

DUTY OFFICER #2  
Young lady here has concerns for  
her girlfriend.

Tiffany again rolls her eyes.

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - NIGHT

PHONE SCREEN:

An image of a smiling Maria on Tiffany's phone.

INTERVIEW ROOM:

Two detectives, HARLEY CZJENOWSKI (30s) and ROCHELLE JELNICK (late 20s) seated one side of a basic table, Tiffany on the other side. An informal interview.

On the table, Maria's phone and clutch bag inside a plastic evidence bag.

TIFFANY  
Said she was gonna go straight  
home. I didn't bother to check when  
I got home later. I mean, I was --

CZJENOWSKI  
-- otherwise engaged?

TIFFANY  
Look, I've always had her back,  
okay. But I'm not her nanny.

JELNICK  
What about friends and associates?

TIFFANY  
None, really. Just me. No real  
boyfriends. Calabrian upbringing  
and all that.

Jelnick's phone PINGS.

She views her phone screen.

JELNICK'S PHONE SCREEN:

Image of a smiling Maria.

RESUME SCENE:

JELNICK

Can see why.

CZJENOWSKI

We'll check out the area where the bag was found. Make some enquiries with the taxi companies, ride-shares, and whatever --

JELNICK

I'll keep in touch, don't worry.

Tiffany frowns.

CZJENOWSKI

Fact is, more often than not they just roll up out of the blue.

Czjenowski stands, hands over his personal contact card.

CZJENOWSKI (CONT'D)

Give us a buzz when she comes home.

Jelnick rolls her eyes at his blasé attitude.

Czjenowski withdraws to the door, a little too eagerly.

Jelnick stands, lingers a while beside Tiffany, a hand, bordering on carnal, on her shoulder.

TIFFANY

What about her bag and phone?

CZJENOWSKI

We'll keep it for a few days. If she doesn't turn up by then, we'll take it further.

Jelnick waits for Czjenowski to leave.

JELNICK

See what I can do.

She proffers Tiffany her own personal contact card.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

There's the station number and my direct contact, okay? C'mon, I'll see you out.

She looks again at the image of Maria on her phone.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

She is very pretty, isn't she?

Tiffany nods her appreciation.

INT. RUEBENS' AND HYDE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

A morose Hyde carries two plates of Indian take-out from the kitchen to the coffee table, places one in front of Ruebens on the sofa, remote in hand, surfing the television.

Hyde places the other plate at the other edge of the table, sits on the sofa away from Ruebens.

Ruebens slides across the sofa beside Hyde, puts a comforting arm around his shoulder.

Hyde shrugs it off.

HYDE

No more, okay?

Ruebens ruffles Hyde's hair.

RUEBENS

Cross my heart. From now on, they'll all live to tell the tale. Promise.

Hyde heaves a sigh, fiddles with his meal.

EXT. JOSIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Jelnick and Czjenowski interview Josie at her front door.

Josie's two CHILDREN hover at her side.

JOSIE

Not really. He rolled up the day he got out. But never really saw him. Few days later he told me he had somewhere else to stay and just disappeared. Why?

CZJENOWSKI

Nothing urgent. He might be able to assist us in our enquiries.

Josie looks at him intently, wanting more.

CZJENOWSKI (CONT'D)

Regarding a missing persons investigation.

JOSIE

Age?

CZJENOWSKI

Twenties.

JOSIE

Doesn't sound like Tommy's cup of tea ...

She deftly places a protective hand down and ushers the children slightly behind her.

The gesture doesn't go unnoticed by Jelnick.

JOSIE (CONT'D)

How might he be --?

Jelnick hands over her personal contact card.

JELNICK

Get him to give one of us a call, if he rolls up.

Ditto Czjenowski and his card.

Without further ado, the Detectives return to their unmarked car parked in the street, Jelnick to the driver's seat.

Josie quickly retreats her children inside, closes the door on the Detectives and the neighbourhood.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - DAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Ruebens rides with the Supervisor in a gopher.

A small trailer is attached, loaded with some rolls of artificial turf-like carpet.

They arrive at a

## NEWLY DUG GRAVESITE

Hyde tidies up the lip of a newly dug site, sweeps loose dirt back into the hole.

The gopher parks, Ruebens jumps off, helps the Supervisor unload the rolls of turf/carpet.

Ruebens and Hyde each take a roll and start laying it out, on the surrounds of the hole.

The Supervisor inspects the hole. Duly impressed.

SUPERVISOR

Fit for purpose.

Ruebens gives the thumbs up.

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)

Anyway, just get this stuff in place for tomorrow and call it quits. Finish it off first thing tomorrow morning.

The Supervisor pulls the gopher away, yells out to them

SUPERVISOR (CONT'D)

You know the score. Lock up when you leave.

## INT. TIFFANY AND MARIA'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Jelnick, her athletic body encased in skinny jeans and tight AC/DC T-shirt, sips on a coffee in the kitchenette with Tiffany still in her work uniform.

JELNICK

I can tell you this much. A certain person's finger prints were found on Maria's phone.

TIFFANY

How do you mean, a certain person?

JELNICK

Guy by the name of Hyde. Got a record. In fact only recently been released from prison.

Tiffany digests this.

TIFFANY

D'you think he's got something to do with --?

JELNICK

Not his preferred game it would seem. Regardless, no-one knows where he is at the moment.

TIFFANY

But his prints were found ...? So, Im not just being paranoid?

JELNICK

No, you're not. But, until something more concrete emerges.

She looks with empathy, bordering on affection, toward Tiffany.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

Look, I'm off for a few days, so I'll run with it in my own time, see if anything comes up.

Tiffany nods her appreciation, not registering Jelnick's intimate attitude towards her.

TIFFANY

What does he look like, this certain person?

JELNICK

Not sure I can ...  
(deliberates)  
What the hell. Why not? I'll drop by the shop on my way home, get his file, slip a pic your way.

Jelnick downs the remains of her coffee, hands her cup to Tiffany.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

We'll stay in touch, yeah?

Tiffany sighs resignedly.

TIFFANY

Meanwhile?

EXT. POPULAR STRIP - NIGHT

Tiffany wanders the strip, shows her phone screen to NIGHT-CLUBBERS in queues outside various venues.

No luck.

She crosses the street, dodges the endless convoy of vehicles that crawl along the strip.

Ruebens' silver-gray Impala in the mix.

IMPALA TRAVELING

Tiffany hurries to the Impala, gets Ruebens' attention. He doesn't stop, but the endless traffic impedes his progress and she ambles alongside the car.

She shoves the phone screen image in his face.

TIFFANY

My friend. Maria. Remember her?  
She's gone mis --

Ruebens raises the window in her face.

Tiffany looks across to the passenger, stares through the murky glass at Hyde.

He turns away, averts the eyes.

A break in the traffic as a few cars ahead pull over to chat with BYSTANDERS. The Impala pulls away, leaves Tiffany in the centre of the street, copping abuse and/or encouragement from all-comers.

Tiffany's face contorts - a Eureka moment.

Roused to action, she thumbs her phone screen:

TIFFANY'S PHONE SCREEN:

The image of Hyde sent by Jelnick.

RESUME SCENE:

Tiffany sprints after the Impala ... it accelerates away from her, scatters other PEDESTRIANS crossing the street.

She flicks a finger at the abuse and/or encouragement from other vehicles, moves back on to the sidewalk, thumbs her phone screen, places it to her ear ...

On answering

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
 (into phone)  
 I've seen him.

JELNICK (V.O.)  
 Him?

TIFFANY  
Him. The crim. The certain person.  
 With the fingerprints.

JELNICK (V.O.)  
 Listen sweetie, where are you?

TIFFANY  
 On the Strip.  
 (a quick survey)  
 Outside the Oriental.

JELNICK (V.O.)  
 The Oriental? Sucks. Okay. Listen.  
 There's a youth hostel on the next  
 block. You know where that is? Head  
 there. I'm five minutes away.

Tiffany ends the call, moves off from her position outside the ORIENTAL MASSAGE PARLOR, watched by the hungry eyes of the unsavory men who loiter nearby.

EXT. YOUTH HOSTEL - NIGHT

Tiffany, hyper, jittery, waits outside the Youth Hostel, watches a few BACKPACKERS enter the premises.

Jelnick, in slim jeans, tight-fitting AC/DC T-shirt, strides swiftly to rendezvous with Tiffany.

She grabs Tiffany by the arm and leads her away.

JELNICK  
 Come with me, sweetie. Give you  
 something for your nerves ...  
 (indicates frantic gum-  
 chewing)  
 ... besides that.

EXT. JELNICK'S APARTMENT BLOCK - NIGHT

A modern medium rise block in a quiet backstreet.

INT. JELNICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

LOUNGE ROOM

Tiffany stands at the broad window with a view to the lights of the nightlife outside.

KITCHENETTE:

At the counter, a coffee pod machine.

Jelnick grabs a bottle of vodka from an overhead cabinet and adds a nip to each of two white china cups of coffee, takes them to the window, hands one to Tiffany.

TIFFANY

Said it heightened the sexual experience. Somehow.

JELNICK

Oxygen deprivation.

TIFFANY

Don't know about that. But he damn near suffocated me.

Jelnick darts an incredulous look: *Did she just say that?*

JELNICK

So, after that?

TIFFANY

Me and Maria said we'd try and find a taxi. But this Hyde guy promised to drive us back without any hassles. Probably shit scared we'd call the cops.

JELNICK

Okay, so we have an earlier model Impala, silver-gray, paint fading in patches. Plate number?

Tiffany shakes her head.

TIFFANY

Never thought.

JELNICK

Cool.

They sip in silence.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

So, this guy who made the noose?

TIFFANY

Nick, something or other, I think.

JELNICK

Build?

TIFFANY

Nice enough body. Long dark hair.  
Good looking. Almost pretty boy  
looks. Know what I mean?

JELNICK

Were they good buddies, you think?  
He and Hyde?

TIFFANY

Seemed that way.

Jelnick waits patiently for elaboration, sips her coffee,  
nudges Tiffany to do the same, which she does.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

But Hyde was different, you know,  
from this Nick guy. I mean,  
according to Maria, they just sat  
on a log, looked at the lights,  
kept his distance ...

JELNICK

Until ...

TIFFANY

Uh-huh. Wasn't long. Maybe four or  
five minutes.

JELNICK

So, the question remains. How did  
Hyde's prints get on Maria's bag  
and phone? Could he have handled it  
when they were talking that night?

TIFFANY

Doubt it. I mean, it's not as if  
she would've handed it to him --  
(breaks off, recalls  
something)

(MORE)

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

NO, NO. I remember now. She had a different bag that night. An old black one. This one was new.

Tiffany now introspective.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

I feel so guilty, going off and leaving her there by her lonesome. Promised me she'd get a taxi home. I know she's pretty naïve, but I doubt she'd go and do anything stupid. Know what I mean?

Jelnick places a comforting arm around Tiffany.

JELNICK

Let's assume she didn't.

TIFFANY

So now what? We know where he hangs out. Can't the cops just go and arrest him?

JELNICK

Hasn't committed any crime. That we know of. Apart from his prints, nothing to link her with him. Maybe he found the bag, saw there was no money, tossed it.

Tiffany subtly shakes her head, not convinced.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

But, without real evidence ...

She ruminates a moment ...

JELNICK (CONT'D)

Got an idea. Check out my wardrobe, shall we?

INT/EXT. POPULAR STRIP - FAST FOOD JOINT - NIGHT

Tiffany, skinny jeans, stiletto heeled calf-high boots, at a bench facing the front window, a view to the sidewalk outside, where ...

Jelnick, similarly dressed to impress the nightlife, strolls back and forth.

She turns to Tiffany at the window, hikes her shoulders.

Ruebens' Impala cruises past.

Tiffany frantically taps on the window, indicates the car.

Jelnick turns, sights the vehicle, quickly punches in a number on her phone as she paces after the car ...

Tiffany's phone PINGS, she checks the screen:

PHONE SCREEN TEXT:

"S Y C K O 6 9"

RESUME SCENE:

Tiffany stares at the screen, bewildered - her phone RINGS, she accepts.

TIFFANY  
What the fuck?

JELNICK (V.O.)  
That's his number, okay?

TIFFANY  
His --?

EXT/INT. POPULAR STRIP/IMPALA TRAVELLING - NIGHT

Jelnick hurries along the sidewalk, talks into her phone.

JELNICK  
Make your way back to my place but  
keep your phone open and record  
this call, yeah? Let's hear what  
they have to say. Got your key?

TIFFANY (V.O.)  
Uh-huh.

JELNICK  
Okay, see you in a while.

Jelnick withdraws the phone from her ear and sidles up alongside the Impala.

Ruebens catches a glimpse of Jelnick, slows the Impala to an idling crawl, yells through the open passenger window.

RUEBENS  
Where ya off to?

Jelnick acts aloof, plays them.

JELNICK

Off to look for a good time.

The Impala halts, Jelnick continues along the sidewalk.

Ruebens beeps his horn ... a few more paces, Jelnick halts, looks back at Ruebens, smiles, approaches.

Hyde gives Ruebens a castigating look.

Ruebens counters with a menacing glare.

Chastened, Hyde gets out and holds open the front passenger door for Jelnick, but she declines and opens the back passenger door herself.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

I'll take the back. Keep an eye on you two.

She enters, pushes aside a length of sash rope fashioned into a noose, regards it a moment.

Unfazed, Hyde gets back in front, the car pulls into the traffic.

INT. IMPALA TRAVELING - NIGHT

The Impala, music blaring, cruises though the city streets. Ruebens half leans back over his seat.

RUEBENS

Name's Nick. Friend here's Tommy.

JELNICK

Jelly.

Ruebens and Hyde eye one another, bemused.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

Nickname. After my surname.

RUEBENS

Well, if it's a jelly good time --

JELNICK

I'll decide who's gonna give me it.

Ruebens lets out a little snigger.

RUEBENS

What you got hidden down those  
tight jeans of yours, eh? A little  
whip? Handcuffs, maybe?

JELNICK

What I've got hidden in my jeans is  
my business.

Saying this, she pushes the sash rope noose into the footwell  
of the other passenger seat.

INT. JELNICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tiffany, rigid on the sofa, stares at the screen of her cell,  
tries to comprehend the *MUFFLED* conversation.

RUEBENS (V.O.)

So, about this jelly good time?

JELNICK (V.O.)

Why don't we just have a chat, do  
some sight-seeing, go from there?

RUEBENS (V.O.)

Know just the place.

TIFFANY

I'm sure you do.

RUEBENS (V.O.)

Bit of a drive.

INT. IMPALA TRAVELING - NIGHT

Jelnick pretends to view the scenery outside.

JELNICK

So what do you guys do to impress a  
young woman?

HYDE

We dig --

Ruebens elbows him in the ribs.

HYDE (CONT'D)

We're excavation contractors.

Jelnick nods, *fair enough*.

JELNICK

Keep you fit, I suppose. Can you  
turn that shit down. Can't hear  
myself think back here.

Ruebens cuts the audio.

RUEBENS

Good idea. Don't really need music  
where we're going, anyways.

INT. JELNICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - LATER

Tiffany, head back on the sofa, rubs her eyes, listens to her  
phone on her lap, still on speaker.

JELNICK (V.O.)

So, this is the infamous Windy  
Point overlook.

Tiffany registers the tone of Jelnick's voice, listens more  
intently.

RUEBENS (V.O.)

And not just for the views.

Tiffany takes her phone with her to the kitchen, places it on  
the bench, fills up an electric kettle, turns it on.

EXT. FOOTHILLS OVERLOOK - NIGHT

The Impala pulls into the secluded spot.

IMPALA

Ruebens nudges Hyde, who frowns in return.

Ruebens persists. Hyde complies.

HYDE

Need to take a piss.

A WHISTLING is heard from somewhere in the back.

RUEBENS

What the fuck's that?

He and Hyde both lunge over to Jelnick in the back seat, as  
she ends the phone call.

Ruebens grabs the phone, the screen still aglow.

## JELNICK'S APARTMENT

TIFFANY curses. In one motion she snatches up her phone, rapidly disconnects, rips the whistling kettle's cord from the power socket. The whistling wanes.

INT/EXT. IMPALA - NIGHT

Ruebens thumbs the screen on Jelnick's phone.

RUEBENS  
Tiffany? Who's Tiffany?

Jelnick opens the back door but not quick enough - Ruebens is already out the car and forces her back in the seat.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
Tommy, need ya here.

Hyde obediently jumps in the back and constrains Jelnick.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
Tiffany?

JELNICK  
Short memory. Best friend of Maria.  
Surely you remember her?

Ruebens drops the phone, rummages in the footwell, retrieves the sash rope noose, waves it in her face.

RUEBENS  
Who the fuck are you?

JELNICK  
Now that you've asked, I'm a police officer.

RUEBENS  
Yeah, yeah.

JELNICK  
And you've been tracked.

Ruebens loses it completely, grabs her hands.

Confined in the back seat, Jelnick has difficulty countering Ruebens and is overpowered.

Ruebens yells at Hyde.

RUEBENS  
Tie her.

Hyde hesitates.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
There is an alternative!

That's enough incentive. Ruebens holds Jelnick's hands, Hyde slips the noose around her wrists, secures them.

That done, Ruebens struggles to pull down Jelnick's jeans. He searches the pockets.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
So where's your ID?

JELNICK  
I'm undercover. What do you think,  
stupid bastard?

Ruebens slaps her about.

JELNICK (CONT'D)  
Fuck you!

He slaps her again.

RUEBENS  
The glove compartment. There's some  
gaffer tape.

Hyde stretches over the seat, grabs a roll of black gaffer tape from the glove compartment.

Ruebens snatches it.

Jelnick screams again.

JELNICK  
You bastard!

Ruebens' eyes flare at this. He slaps her so hard she falls unconscious.

He lifts her head, struggles but manages to get Jelnick's mouth muzzled with the gaffer tape.

RUEBENS  
Open the trunk.

Hyde pops the trunk, helps Ruebens drag the slumped Jelnick out of the car, on to the ground.

Ruebens retrieves the tape from the car, tapes Jelnick's ankles, uses the dangling length of sash rope to tie her hands with her ankles, confining her in the fetal position.

They position the unconscious Jelnick in the trunk among the collection of spades and shovels.

Ruebens tosses the gaffer tape in with the body, slams the lid shut, gets back in the car.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
Gotta figure this one out.

HYDE  
If she is a cop ...?

RUEBENS  
If this was a set-up, the cavalry would be here by now. Besides, why would the cops even suspect us? It's not as if we've left a calling card or anything.

Ruebens cogitates, turns and stares through Hyde.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
Like finger prints.

Hyde racks his brain, at a loss.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
The baq.

HYDE  
The bag?

Blood rushes through Hyde's eyes, unsettling him.

HYDE (CONT'D)  
Someone found the baq?

RUEBENS  
With her fuckin' phone inside. And your prints on it!

Hyde is affronted.

HYDE  
You're the one told me to chuck it - any where.

Ruebens is lost for a response, thinks long and hard, gathers his wits.

RUEBENS

Cool it, cool it. If someone found it and took it to the cops, why would they bother to check for prints, eh?

Hyde seems satisfied with this ... momentarily.

HYDE

Yeah but, maybe whoever was trying to phone her that night figured she might be in trouble and reported her missing.

RUEBENS

So what?

Jelnick's phone on the back seat RINGS, startles them both.

Hyde retrieves the phone, stares at the screen, shoves it in front of Ruebens' face.

PHONE SCREEN:

Shows caller ID: TIFFANY

RESUME SCENE:

HYDE

Maybe she's the one who you tried --

Ruebens snatches the phone from Hyde.

RUEBENS

We'll find out, shall we?

He accepts the phone call ...

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Tiffany, darling. You looking for another enhanced experience?

TIFFANY (V.O.)

You know what I'm looking for.

RUEBENS

I got a fair idea.

TIFFANY (V.O.)

So where -- ?

RUEBENS

We'll get to that. But first off.  
You do exactly as I tell you.

TIFFANY (V.O.)

Well first off, for your  
information. She's a cop, you know.

RUEBENS

Yeah, yeah. Now listen carefully.

INT. JELNICK'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Tiffany scribbles instructions on a notepad on the kitchen bench.

TIFFANY

And how do you know I haven't  
already contacted them and played  
the phone call that was recorded?

RUEBENS (V.O.)

Well, then, that doesn't look good  
for your friend now, does it?

Tiffany remains silent for an extended beat ...

RUEBENS (V.O.)

Thought as much. You got my  
instructions.

The call is terminated. Tiffany stares at the phone, dubious.

INT. IMPALA - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Ruebens motions urgently toward the glove compartment.

RUEBENS

Pen.

Hyde rummages through the glove compartment, finds a biro,  
hands it to Ruebens in exchange for Jelnick's phone.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Just in case.

He scribbles Tiffany's phone number on the back of his hand,  
motions to the phone Hyde holds.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Now toss it. We'll use my K-Mart  
burner if we need to contact her.

Hyde pulls out his grotty handkerchief and starts to wipe over the phone.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
What the fuck?

HYDE  
Finger prints.

RUEBENS  
Not with that for fuck's sake. Who needs fingerprints if you're gonna hand 'em over your whole DNA.

Hyde shrugs, puts his handkerchief in his pocket, searches under his seat, finds an oily rag, wipes over the phone, tosses it and the rag randomly out the window.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
No-one knows for sure about the others. Can't tie them to us. But this one ...

He looks at Tiffany's number on the back of his hand.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
... this Tiffany is a different kettle of fish.

HYDE  
Meaning?

RUEBENS  
What do you think!

Hyde gestures over shoulder to the back of the vehicle.

HYDE  
And ...?

RUEBENS  
Both of them.

Hyde shoves his face into his palms, overwhelmed.

INT. JELNICK'S APARTMENT/DETECTIVE BULL PEN - NIGHT

INTERCUT

TIFFANY, business card in hand, punches in a number in her phone, waits impatiently.

Finally the call is answered ...

TIFFANY

I'm after Detective Czjenowski.  
I've tried the contact number he  
gave me ...

DETECTIVE #1

A Detective #1 on a desk phone.

DETECTIVE #1

He's off for a few days.

TIFFANY (V.O.)

Damn. Okay, could you pass a  
message on to him. From Detective  
Jelnick ...

DETECTIVE #1

She's off too.

TIFFANY (V.O.)

I know, but her phone's gone dead.  
She's helping me find my friend but  
now she's gone missing ...

DETECTIVE #1

She's not missing. Like I said,  
she's just not on duty --

TIFFANY releases her frustration.

TIFFANY

Look, my name is Tiffany, and this  
is serious, man. She was tracking  
down some weirdos and she texted me  
this message: S Y C K O 6 9... You  
got that? Said it was a vanity  
something or other, but I'm sure  
Czjenowski'll figure it out ...  
Seriously, I'm scared she might be  
in grave danger ... Look, sorry,  
but I gotta go.

She terminates the call, bites her bottom lip.

DETECTIVE #1, scribbles on a note pad, addresses the other  
Detectives in the room.

DETECTIVE #1

Don't know what to make of this.

The others give him casual attention.

TIFFANY goes to the overhead cabinet, grabs the bottle of vodka, finds a glass, pours a generous shot, takes a sip, pulls a face, not to her liking.

She takes a lime from a small fruit bowl on the bench, searches through the kitchen drawers, locates a small paring knife, cuts a slice of lime, swirls it in the spirit with the knife, takes a sip, followed by a generous gulp of courage.

Her grip on the small knife tightens.

END INTERCUT

EXT. STREET #5 - NIGHT

Several closed cafés, small business offices, quiet for the night except for a Seven-Eleven deli with a few customers.

Here and there, a few lower-class SEX WORKERS stroll warily.

Cars cruise in both directions, take in the scene.

Tiffany, skinny jeans and stiletto heeled calf-high boots, waits, chews nervously outside the deli.

Her fresh faced, healthy appearance proves attractive to a few punters.

A DRIVER in an upmarket vehicle beckons her over but she turns her back on him. The Driver gives her the finger, drives off.

Ruebens' Impala approaches, pulls up ... the passenger window lowers.

Tiffany approaches, peers inside the car. No Maria, no Jelnick.

She steps back, scans her surrounds, cogitates a moment.

Reubens yells across Hyde to Tiffany

RUEBENS

Make up your mind, lady. Meter's  
ticking over.

A Chuckle from Hyde.

Tiffany gathers her courage, makes the decision, moves with resolve into the back seat of the Impala.

The Impala cruises off into the night.

INT/EXT. IMPALA TRAVELING - NIGHT

Tiffany, grim, stares scathingly at the back of Ruebens, driving, and Hyde riding shotgun.

TIFFANY  
Where are they?

RUEBENS  
Why don't you tell us.

TIFFANY  
Me? You're the ones who --

RUEBENS  
You know what I mean.

Tiffany acts dumb.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
Well, did you or didn't you?

Tiffany tenses.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
Doesn't look good.

His menacing tone prompts her.

TIFFANY  
No. I didn't. Rochelle's the only cop I know ... She came to my place when I reported Maria missing. And now she's missing.

RUEBENS  
Rochelle, eh?

TIFFANY  
Yeah. And you were the last ones to see her - and Maria. And I want to know where they are.

RUEBENS  
Came to the right place, then. But we might just check our status, first. Just in case.

TIFFANY  
I told you --

RUEBENS  
Yeah, yeah.

Ruebens checks the rear view mirror, nudges Hyde.

Hyde takes the hint, checks the passenger wing mirror.

TIFFANY

Just take me to them, now.

Ruebens explodes, turns to her, eyes off the road.

RUEBENS

You are in no position to give orders.

The car swerves, Hyde has the presence of mind to grab the steering wheel, but not before the car sideswipes another vehicle parked in the street, the sound of metal on metal.

Ruebens turns back, resumes control, unaware that

THE NEAR-SIDE HEADLIGHT IS DAMAGED, NOT OPERATING.

Tiffany composes herself.

TIFFANY

Well, how much further then?

RUEBENS

Patience. Tommy and I have a job on the go. Got some prelim to attend to before the boss checks in tomorrow.

TIFFANY

What the --?

Ruebens winks at Hyde who cottons on.

HYDE

Your friend Maria didn't tell you?, We're excavation contractors. We dig holes for a living.

Ruebens can't contain himself, bursts into laughter.

RUEBENS

For a living, yeah. And we got some unfinished business before you meet up with your friends.

Tiffany looks out into the darkness, tries to get her bearings ... and her resolve.

TIFFANY

Listen guys. Not convinced about all this. I'll take my chances that they'll contact me sooner or later.

HYDE

Maybe if ya get yourself a ouija board.

He laughs at his own joke.

TIFFANY

What the fuck's that supposed to mean?

RUEBENS

Ignore him. They're just out of reception at the moment, no doubt.

More raucous laughter from Hyde.

Ruebens pretends to chide him.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Calm down. Not that funny.

TIFFANY

Just pull over, will ya.

RUEBENS

Nah, come along for the ride. What we have to do won't take long.

TIFFANY

I'm gettin' out, fuck yous.

Tiffany goes for her door handle, but Ruebens presses the central lock button - doors and windows - she is trapped.

Tiffany kicks out at the door.

RUEBENS

Do that again, you'll meet your friends quicker than expected.

TIFFANY

Bastard!

She kicks out at the door again.

Incensed, Rueben's turns to grab her ...

Hyde grabs him, yells at him, gestures outside, ahead of them.

HYDE  
Nick, not now.

Ruebens looks ahead, gathers his cool, slows the car.

EXT. STREET - TRAFFIC LIGHTS - NIGHT

The Impala pulls up in the curb-side lane at the red traffic light, waits patiently ...

... A BEAT ...

A Police Cruiser idles alongside in the outer left turn lane.

RUEBENS smiles casually.

POLICE CRUISER/IMPALA

Through the Impala's heavily tinted back passenger window, a blurred TIFFANY waves frantically at the Police.

RUEBENS rotates an index finger by his temple, insinuating Tiffany is off her face, too much to drink.

The COP #1 riding shotgun returns a snigger.

The traffic light changes to green ...

The Impala turns right ...

The Cruiser turns left.

COP #1 glances at

IMPALA LICENSE PLATE:

"SYCKO-69"

Cop #1 punches the license number into the dash communications module.

A few seconds ... he reads the response, addresses COP #2.

COP #1  
Nick Ruebens. Ring a bell?

Cop #2 shakes his head, disinterested, drives on, content to while away the night with as little disruption as possible.

But Cop #1 is not so disinterested, and scrolls the display.

COP #1 (CONT'D)  
Says he's out on parole.

COP#2  
Curfew?

COP #1  
(consults his watch)  
Few hours left.

Cop #2 continues to drive.

Cop #1 stares daggers at him.

Cop #2 heaves a sigh, slows and does a u-turn.

INT. IMPALA TRAVELING - NIGHT

In the back seat, a frantic Tiffany strains over her shoulder to see out the rear window.

In the rear view mirror, Ruebens sees the Cruiser complete the u-turn, pull up at the red traffic lights, waits for them to change red to green.

RUEBENS  
Time to check out the  
neighbourhood.

He turns the car from the well-lit main road into a quieter, dimly-lit side street. He accelerates, not enough to attract attention.

After a block, he cuts the headlight, makes a turn into another side street, eases into a dark driveway of some random house, park brake only.

In the darkness, he and Hyde peer back and glimpse the Cruiser pass by along the first side street.

A light from within the front room of the house flicks on.

Ruebens quietly reverses the Impala from the driveway, drives off, headlight still doused.

TIFFANY  
Where the fuck are we?

RUEBENS  
Close to our place of employment,  
if my memory serves me correct.

In the poorly lit street, an animal, a cat maybe, runs across in front of the vehicle.

There's a THUD, and an animal SQUEAL.

Tiffany gasps, dreads to consider the outcome.

TIFFANY  
Aren't you going to stop?

RUEBENS  
Why?

TIFFANY  
You might have killed it.

RUEBENS  
No point, then, is there?

TIFFANY  
You're no better than a cold-blooded murderer.

Hyde nearly chokes on his muffled snort.

Tiffany stares at the back of Ruebens' head, her face contorted with revulsion.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)  
Let me out ... damn you!

HYDE  
Thought you wanted to meet up with your friends?

TIFFANY  
Not with you, you sick bastard.

Ruebens loses it. He slams on the brakes mid-street, scaring even Hyde.

He tries to open his door - but it's centrally locked. He presses the button to unlock, gets out, points a threatening finger at Tiffany.

RUEBENS  
Sick, maybe, but --

Tiffany reels back against the other door, tries the handle.

The door flings open, Tiffany scrambles out.

Ruebens sprints around the car, confronts her.

She grabs a fistful of Ruebens' hair but he grabs her hand, pulls her toward him, slams a fist in her face. Her gum flies from her mouth all over Ruebens' face.

Tiffany slumps, unconscious.

He shoves her back on the rear seat, wipes his face, disgusted.

He goes to his door, releases the trunk latch, rummages under Jelnick's inanimate body in the trunk, removes the roll of gaffer tape.

He binds Tiffany's hands, leaves her slumped in the back seat.

The maniac returns to the driver's seat, stares ahead a moment, some deep breaths, drives off.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)

Let's go to work.

Hyde recoils against his door, chances a glance at Ruebens, says nothing, stares ahead.

INT. DETECTIVE BULL PEN - NIGHT

Czjenowski walks briskly into the open bull pen area, joins a bevy of Detectives.

CZJENOWSKI

Meanwhile she awaits me at the bar.

Slightly overweight Lieutenant Garth ROWLANDS (50s) beckons him over to the desk of Detective Toni HABIB, points to the computer screen.

ROWLANDS

Got a crazy phone call. Your name came up. And Jelnick's. Seemed to imply she was in some sort of danger. We tried to contact her but her phone's not responding. Thought you might know --

CZJENOWSKI

Haven't seen her since our last shift.

ROWLANDS

So what do you make of this then?

Czjenowski leans in and views the screen.

CZJENOWSKI  
 (mumbles to self)  
 Tiffany, right.  
 (to those assembled)  
 Sierra Yankee Charlie Kilo Oscar  
 Six Nine. Could be a car's vanity  
 license plate, maybe.

ROWLANDS  
 Could be.  
 (to Habib)  
 Get on to it.

Habib keys in instructions on her computer, reads the response on the screen.

HABIB  
 In the name of one Nicholas, Nick,  
 Ruebens ...

Habib continues keying in instructions ...

HABIB (CONT'D)  
 Hmmmm ...

Rowlands and others lean in to view the screen ...

ROWLANDS  
 Parole? Six weeks. So what's the  
 connection? Where does this Tiffany  
 woman come into it? Not to mention  
 Jelnick.

CZJENOWSKI  
 Me and Jelnick took a statement  
 from her a few days back. When she  
 reported her friend missing ... I  
 believe Jelnick followed up again  
 in her own time when we finished  
 our shift.

ROWLANDS  
 Why's that, you reckon?

CZJENOWSKI  
 Got the hots, maybe?

Scornful looks from some of the others.

CZJENOWSKI (CONT'D)  
 Well, she does have an agenda.

Rowlands diffuses the tension.

ROWLANDS

So, this missing friend ...?

Manners lacking, Czjenowski leans over in front of Habib and keys in more instructions ... reads the screen ...

CZJENOWSKI

A Maria Callistini.

ROWLANDS

And the connection?

CZJENOWSKI

Dunno. This Tiffany mentioned that her and the Maria chick were picked up by these two dudes ... Nick and, er, Tommy, I think, driving an older silver Impala. And one of them, the driver Nick, tried some weird shit with ropes around her neck, sort of heighten the sexual experience sort of shit.

ROWLANDS

What's his history, this Ruebens guy?

Habib retakes the screen, types commands.

HABIB

On parole after three years for indecent assault ... and mention here of attempted murder.

Concerned looks all round.

HABIB (CONT'D)

As a minor. No conviction. His own mother, apparently.

CZJENOWSKI

Bastard.

ROWLANDS

Why, though?

Silence as they speculate.

CZJENOWSKI

Abuse ... maybe?

Habib continues searching the screen.

HABIB

Single mom. No record of any father. Seems she disowned the kid right from the start. Kicked him out when he turned fourteen, taken in by carer family who alleged he tried to rape their natural daughter two years later. But never went to court.

ROWLANDS

Okay. So, Jelnick. You think she's gone and got herself involved somehow without us knowing?

CZJENOWSKI

Yeah, well. Like I said. She has an agenda.

Rowlands takes a step back, addresses all those assembled.

ROWLANDS

Right, then. Let's start off with the vehicle.

INT. POLICE CRUISER TRAVELING - NIGHT

Cop #1 reads aloud the message on their dash screen:

COP #1

Check for silver-gray Impala sedan, plate number *SIERRA, YANKEE, CHARLIE, KILO, OSCAR, SIX, NINE.*

(into coms radio)

Copy. Vehicle in question last sighted in vicinity of Hifield Memorial Cemetery. Two males driving, woman vaguely fitting description a passenger in the back. Acted strangely.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - NIGHT

The Impala's remaining headlight is doused as it approaches the service entrance.

Hyde slips out, unlocks the gate, the car drives through.

He scrambles back into the still moving vehicle.

INT. IMPALA TRAVELING - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

In the back seat Tiffany, hands taped, peers into the dimness.

EXT/INT. CEMETERY #1 - IMPALA TRAVELING - CONTINUOUS

The car travels the service road towards paved driveways.

Subdued light from the security lamps barely illuminate the headstones in rows along stretches of lawn on either side.

TIFFANY

What is this?

RUEBENS

As my friend here said, we're excavation contractors. We dig holes for a living.

HYDE

And we fill 'em again.

RUEBENS

Bit of a dead end job, but hey, at times can be fulfilling.

They share a laugh.

Tiffany is not amused. She struggles again with the locked door, to no avail.

TIFFANY

Let me out. You promised me you'd take me to my friends.

Ruebens takes a turn at the intersection with another driveway.

RUEBENS

And I'm one to keep my promises.

The car gently mounts the concrete curb, cruises across the lawn, towards the newly dug site with the green turf-like carpet surrounding it.

Tiffany fights off panic, gathers her wits, reaches to her boot, removes the paring knife she took from Jelnick's kitchen, tries to sever the tape.

The car comes to a halt before she can liberate her hands.

She tries a different tack, pretends to dry retch.

TIFFANY  
I think I'm gonna puke.

RUEBENS  
Not in here, fuck you.

Ruebens unlocks the doors.

Hyde gets out, goes toward the back door as ...

Tiffany, hands taped still, slashes at Ruebens' neck, misses the carotid but does enough damage. Ruebens slams a hand to stem the bleeding.

Hyde opens Tiffany's door, she lashes out at him. He jumps back, loses balance, falls to the ground in the darkness.

Tiffany makes good her escape but her bound hands force an awkward gait. She fumbles the knife, drops it, heads off in the darkness.

The interior light from the car is enough to illuminate the knife. Hyde picks it up, checks on Ruebens who waves him off.

RUEBENS (CONT'D)  
Slit her throat.

Hyde is hesitant, weighs up the knife in his hand, sees the resolve in Rueben's eyes, stumbles off after Tiffany.

Ruebens turns on the car's headlight, drives one-handed, traverses the lawns and churning up grave-sites.

TIFFANY

... comes to a huge elaborate Italianate 'mausoleum' type memorial, cowers behind it as the Impala's headlight swivels and sweeps over the site.

Satisfied the car has gone off, she checks for Hyde, no sign.

She backs away in the darkness ...

... stumbles against dense bushes, eases through them ...

... comes to the edge of a pond ...

... without due care she steps back, almost stumbles into the pond, is not quick enough to muffle her response ...

TIFFANY  
Fuck.

HYDE

... in close proximity, hears the profanity, sprints off to the bushes, ploughs through ... and ends up in the pond.

He lets out a tirade of abuse to no-one in particular.

TIFFANY

... heads off toward a major building complex - the Chapels - is caught in the Impala's's headlight.

She veers off again into the darkness.

EXT. STREET #4 - NIGHT

A street on the perimeter of the cemetery complex. Lights go on in several houses.

RESUME CEMETERY:

TIFFANY

.. makes her way toward a small isolated building, a poorly maintained workers' Toilet Block discreetly screened by a tall hedge all around it.

Unsure, Tiffany pushes against the door. It is unlocked. The hinges CREAK, she flinches.

She waits a moment, cocks her ear. With the door slightly ajar, she squeezes silently through inside.

EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT - SAME

On the veranda, a middle-aged MALE in dressing gown, on his cell phone. The sound of a car Roars in the background.

RESUME TOILET BLOCK

Tiffany gropes her way in the darkness, bumps into a wash basin, curses, cowers down below it, inhales some courage.

Outside, somewhere, the sound of the Impala pulls up.

RUEBENS (O.S.)

If she gets away, you're looking at  
one long holiday.

The Car roars off again.

Tiffany listens intently.

SILENCE

INT. DETECTIVE BULL PEN - NIGHT - SAME

DETECTIVE #1 on a desk phone calls to no-one in particular.

DETECTIVE #1  
Getting a number of reports of  
suspected vandalism in the Hifield  
cemetery. Vehicle doing burn-outs.  
Possibly silver-gray. Could be  
connected maybe?

INT. TOILET BLOCK - NIGHT

Tiffany, on hands and knees, moves with stealth back toward the slightly ajar door ... passes under an automatic hand dryer, activates it.

The SOUND scares the wits out of her.

She scrambles deeper into the building, comes to an open door of a cubicle. Soft light shines through a small window at the back wall above the toilet bowl.

She enters the cubicle, locks the door, waits.

The hand dryer stops operating.

SILENCE again.

The door to the toilet block CREAKS open.

A hand reaches in, fumbles on the wall beside the jamb, locates a light switch, flicks it.

The small room is barely lit by the single old, low wattage globe, covered in cobwebs and dust.

A sodden Hyde, paring knife in hand, cautiously enters.

Inside the cubicle, Tiffany's eyes register fear.

She mounts the filthy toilet seat, struggles to hoist herself to the small window, tries to open it. It won't budge.

Hyde fumbles with the ENGAGED lock mechanism on the cubicle door. It rotates a little.

Tiffany steps off the toilet seat. With all her might, she holds the lock on the inside of the cubicle door until there's no more force from outside.

She stands back upon the toilet seat ... Waits ...

The door is kicked open, reveals a menacing Hyde.

THE STILETTO HEEL on Tiffany's boot strikes out, impacts Hyde square in the eye, dislodges the eyeball.

He falls to the floor in agony.

Tiffany jumps over him, scuttles out the main door, flees into the darkness.

INT. DETECTIVE BULL PEN - NIGHT

Detective #1, on desk phone, calls across the room.

DETECTIVE #1

Caller confirms vehicle to be an  
older model sedan, silver-gray  
... hard to tell the make ...

CZJENOWSKI

Impala, maybe? Plate number?

Detective #1 shakes head in the negative.

CZJENOWSKI (CONT'D)

Sierra, yankee, charlie, kilo,  
oscar, six, nine, maybe? What this  
Tiffany chick sent in. Looks like  
somehow she's got herself involved  
in these lowlife.

ROWLANDS

And Jelnick ...?

CZJENOWSKI

They all seem to be linked.

(to Rowlands)

Your call --

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - NIGHT

Tiffany stumbles through the darkness, retreating from the chaotic single headlight of the Impala.

She makes her way to a roadway to another section of the cemetery.

As she makes headway, she is lit from behind ... by the Impala's single headlight.

At the Cemetery Service Entrance, a Police Cruiser, light bar pulsing, enters ...

... approaches at speed along the Service Road ... drifts the wheels into the roadway, flicks its high beam ...

Reubens shield his eyes with his driving hand ...

Tiffany veers off the roadway on to an open stretch of lawn.

There's an almighty CRASH -- somewhere.

Tiffany stops, looks back at the Police Cruiser as it flips through the air, thuds back to earth on its roof.

The Impala, both headlights now missing, swerves away from the upturned Cruiser, mounts the low curb and continues across the lawn in pursuit ...

With Tiffany barely visible, Ruebens flattens the foot ...

He is distracted by the THWUMPING of a helicopter overhead, and the SIRENS and flashing lights of multiple Cruisers speeding toward him, churning turf into the air.

With one hand on his bleeding neck, Ruebens ignores Tiffany, and guns it into the darkness.

The searchlight from the overhead helicopter blinds him and he swerves out of control ...

... and into the mini backhoe excavator that's been left beside a new plot.

The Cruisers converge on the carnage ...

The helicopter lands nearby on the lawn ...

An unmarked car pulls up ... Czjenowski, Rowlands, and Habib jettison from the vehicle before it comes to a halt.

Rowlands takes charge, rushes to Ruebens, slumped against a deflated air-bag, life virtually drained from him, his torso soaked in blood.

Rowlands feels Ruebens' pulse ...

ROWLANDS

You're not getting out of it that easy, you bastard.

Ruebens manages to turn his eyes toward Rowlands.

RUEBENS  
I'm not a bastard.

And that is his last breath.

Rowlands is not fazed by the pathetic, lifeless eyes.

ROWLANDS  
Nah, not any more, you're not.

He eases himself away from the Impala, beckons a uniformed officer over to the wreck.

ROWLANDS (CONT'D)  
Keep an eye on this 'till I sort everything out.

He makes his way over to the

UPTURNED CRUISER

An ambulance and fire truck pull up beside it.

The Patrol Cops sitting on the curb of the driveway, shaken.

ROWLANDS (CONT'D)  
Apart from the vehicle ... and your ego, anything else?

The Patrol Cops shake heads in unison.

ROWLANDS (CONT'D)  
Your paperwork, not mine.

They nod heads in unison as two PARAMEDICS move in to attend.

Czjenowski saunters alongside Rowlands, surveys the flashing lights in the surrounding mayhem.

A Fire Crew #2 right the upturned Cruiser. It shudders and sends dust everywhere as it settles on its four wheels.

The two Paramedics assist the Patrol Cops into the back of the ambulance.

CZJENOWSKI  
Popular place, eh. So popular, people are --

ROWLANDS  
Don't.

He scans the darkness, away from the flashing lights.

ROWLANDS (CONT'D)  
Report said two males, one female?

CZJENOWSKI  
Correct.

Rowlands gestures toward the Impala.

Czjenowski gets the message, calls to a couple of UNIFORMS

CZJENOWSKI (CONT'D)  
You two, with me.

UNLIT NEWLY DUG GRAVE

Hyde, a hand over his mangled eye, wields the knife, targets Tiffany standing on the lawn-like carpet surrounding the newly dug grave.

He gestures toward the wrecked Impala down the slope by the Service Road.

HYDE  
You did this.

TIFFANY  
Me? Good riddance to the sick  
bastard.

HYDE  
Don't call him that. He had no say  
in it.

Hyde ventures closer to her, more menacing.

She backs away. Her stilettos cause her to stumble slightly, lose her foothold in the carpet. She rights herself.

TIFFANY  
No say in what?

HYDE  
How he came in to this world.

TIFFANY  
And you're gonna defend him for  
what he's done since. What are you?  
Lovers or something?

A chord is struck.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

He's just a twisted pervert if you ask me.

HYDE

Not like that. He just ... There was some bad connections ...

(gestures to his head)

Plenty of signs there, but no one wanted to know. They never do.

TIFFANY

That's right, blame everyone else.

HYDE

Only those who should've known better.

TIFFANY

Like who?

Hyde swaps hands with the knife, reveals the vacant eye socket.

HYDE

Some women for starters.

TIFFANY

You're kidding me.

HYDE

His bitch of a mother started it all. Not to mention that little tart of a foster sister. Claimed he raped her.

TIFFANY

How do you know he didn't?

HYDE

Some things you just know, all right?

TIFFANY

And what about you?

HYDE

What about me?

TIFFANY

Women?

HYDE

Only a sister. And she hates me  
'cos I --

He lowers the knife, no longer threatening.

HYDE (CONT'D)

Not my scene.

TIFFANY

Hate to think what was.

She hits a nerve. He lowers his gaze, pathetically shakes his head ...

HYDE

I tried to get help. But like Nick,  
they all just glossed over it.  
Never bothered to look below the  
surface.

TIFFANY

Look. I really don't care. Right  
now, all I want to do is find my  
friends.

He droops his shoulder, resigned, looks beyond her toward the wrecked Impala.

HYDE

If you dig deep enough, who knows  
what might be unearthed.

An intense beam of light shines on Hyde's face.

CZJENOWSKI (O.S.)

Drop the weapon.

Startled and disoriented, Hyde instinctively raises the knife, as if in defiance.

Before he can act further, a bullet enters his good eye.

The impact sends him reeling backwards, he loses his balance, trips on the green lawn look-alike carpet surrounding the grave site, falls six feet down, flat on his back.

Czjenowski, weapon in hand and accompanied by two Uniforms, rushes to Tiffany.

CZJENOWSKI (CONT'D)

Look after her.

He goes to the open grave, beckons one of the Uniforms to hand over his flashlight.

He takes the flashlight, shines it on Hyde lying face up, both eye sockets mangled.

CZJENOWSKI (CONT'D)

Didn't see that one coming, did ya.

Czjenowski retreats, takes hold of Tiffany, leads her away.

TIFFANY

What did you do that for? I was trying to get him to --

CZJENOWSKI

Just in case you didn't notice, he had a --

TIFFANY

He was blind for fuck's sake. He was calming down. Now we'll never --

Czjenowski dismisses her plea, hands her back to the Uniforms.

CZJENOWSKI

Get her to safety.

The Uniforms escort a reluctant Tiffany toward the ambulance.

She looks over her shoulder to see Czjenowski head toward the Impala. She breaks away and joins him.

TIFFANY

One last look.

They approach the Impala where the Fire Crew, supervised by Rowlands, work to extricate Ruebens from the wreck.

With Ruebens halfway out, a small fire erupts from under the hood ... within seconds the front of the vehicle is ablaze.

The two Fire Crew drag Ruebens' body clear, others rush in with fire extinguishers and promptly quell the flames - but not before the front part of the cabin is torched.

CZJENOWSKI

Shoulda left him to burn.

ROWLANDS

I suspect he's doing just that. But that leaves us with a problem, given your haste to dispose of the other one.

Czjenowski can't see the problem.

ROWLANDS (CONT'D)

How are we going to locate Jelnick and the other young woman?

Piqued, Czjenowski can't avoid Tiffany's piercing glare.

EXT. STREET #4 - NIGHT

A party of ONLOOKERS gathered in the street on the perimeter of the cemetery complex, some with their phones try to capture some action from afar.

Television News vans bustle their way upon the scene.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - NIGHT - LATER

The whole area is cordoned off with crime scene tape, brightly lit by portable floodlight units.

A POLICE PHOTOGRAPHER wanders about, captures the evidence ... and the ongoing activity.

A POLICE TECHNICIAN supervises a tow truck DRIVER hook a cable to the distorted front of the Impala.

The Driver hops in the truck's cab, activates the winch ...

The Impala, it's license plate clearly visible, slowly snails up the ramps, toward the tray top.

Halfway up, the Impala's trunk lid pops open.

In full view of the Technician and Photographer standing at the rear of the vehicle, Jelnick's bound and gagged body.

Eyes agog.

The camera snaps repeatedly.

Television News crews jostle for their exclusive.

INT. HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

Tiffany, seated in a bedside chair, delicately chews gum as she holds Jelnick's hand. There are the usual monitors attached to the patient propped up in bed.

TIFFANY

They thought about inducing a coma,  
but just like that you came good.

JELNICK

Good except for the head.

TIFFANY

Yeah. Must have given you an  
almighty whack.

JELNICK

At least I lived to tell the tale.

TIFFANY

Know the feeling. Which one was it  
by the way?

Tiffany gently massages her own jaw.

JELNICK

That bastard Ruebens.

TIFFANY

Well, he won't be doing that again.

JELNICK

Locked up?

TIFFANY

Gone to hell, I imagine. Smashed  
his car into an excavator.  
Apparently bled to death. Seems  
he'd had his throat cut.

JELNICK

Throat cut?

Tiffany chuckles, eyes brighten, about to say something --  
but Jelnick feebly raises a hand, partially nods.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

Bit of sharp metal from the car,  
perhaps?

Tiffany reads the implications.

TIFFANY

Maybe it was his pal, the other  
dude. Had a knife, tried to take me  
out. Before he was shot by --

JELNICK

Did they find the knife?

TIFFANY

Yeah. Totally covered in blood.

JELNICK

Not much chance of finding prints,  
I don't suppose.

TIFFANY

Nah, don't suppose.

JELNICK

And probably the type of knife  
you'd pick up at any store.

TIFFANY

Probably.

Jelnick manages a smile.

JELNICK

As for your friend?

The comment deflates Tiffany, almost to the point of tears.

TIFFANY

I keep praying that she'll just  
walk in the door, after a wild  
night out.

JELNICK

Let's face it, doubt there's much  
chance of that. To be honest.

Tiffany accepts the fate accompli, checks her phone.

TIFFANY

Anyway, got an interview with your  
off-sider and his boss. Better get  
it over and done with.

JELNICK

You know where I live.

Tiffany gives a warm smile ... hesitates a moment ...  
delicately pecks her on the forehead, and awkwardly exits.

INT. POLICE INTERVIEW ROOM - DAY

An informal interview with Rowlands and Tiffany. There's a desk but both are seated away from it.

ROWLANDS

Thanks for coming in. We need to get this down.

Tiffany nods her understanding.

Czjenowski enters with a coffee, hands it over to Tiffany but not by the handle. The mug is hot, Tiffany almost spills it.

He sits behind the desk, starts recording on his phone.

ROWLANDS (CONT'D)

First off, a recap. After Jelnick hitched a ride, so to speak, with our dearly departed, she phoned you and you listened in for ... how long, roughly?

TIFFANY

They made it up to the overlook. Before the phone went dead, I heard Hyde mumble something about going for a leak. That's when I got real scared, 'cos I figured he was gonna leave Rochelle alone in the car with the evil one --

CZJENOWSKI

You telling me Hyde wasn't evil?

TIFFANY

Not like that Ruebens. Was almost like Hyde was under his spell.

CZJENOWSKI

He was evil in my book.

TIFFANY

Maybe. But he kept telling me stuff about how Ruebens was misunderstood. All to do with --

Czjenowski doesn't buy this.

CZJENOWSKI

We all have shit upbringing, but --

Rowlands holds up a hand, to quell this discourse.

ROWLANDS

We know a bit about his upbringing.  
But as my colleague argues, doesn't  
give him the right to rape anyone.

TIFFANY

Did he?

CZJENOWSKI

What d'you think?

TIFFANY

Not according to Hyde.

CZJENOWSKI

Why are you defending this asshole?  
He was about to sink the knife --

TIFFANY

(addresses Rowlands)

Don't think so. It was dark where  
we were, up on that hill. He was  
bleeding from one eye, couldn't see  
a thing. I was calming him down,  
trying to get him to tell me where  
Maria and Rochelle were. And I  
think he was, until --

CZJENOWSKI

Sorry for saving your life.

Tiffany ignores him, again addresses Rowlands.

TIFFANY

Look, I'm just giving you what he  
was saying. Seemed to me that he  
wanted to explain a few things  
before ...

(eyeballs Czjenowski)

... the inevitable.

Czjenowski huffs.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

He said that people only see what  
they want to see. But if they dug  
deep enough they'd be surprised  
what might be unearthed --

The light bulb goes on.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Grave-diggers!

CZJENOWSKI

So?

ROWLANDS

(to Tiffany)

Say that again?

TIFFANY

They were grave-diggers, for  
Christ's sake.

ROWLANDS

And if we bothered to dig --

Rowlands hotfoots it for the door, Tiffany in tow.

Czjenowski watches them, bewildered, like *WTF?*

Never-the-less, he rushes off after them.

EXT. CEMETERY #1 - DAY

LAWN AREA

Three Ground Staff with small gardening tools, try to  
rehabilitate the lawn damaged by tire tracks.

Nearby, a funeral takes place at the newly prepared site. A  
coffin sits upon a shiny Casket Lowering Device (CLD).

To one side of the congregation of MOURNERS, there's a  
display of adventure equipment: a climbing pick; rucksack;  
hiking boots; and a sign composed of exotic flowers: "*ONWARDS  
AND UPWARDS*"

A few blood stains visible on the green lawn lookalike carpet  
that surrounds the gravesite.

A MINISTER gives the final eulogy.

MINISTER

And so we farewell one of God's  
unique creations, one who was  
always determined to go where few  
humans had gone before. Eyes always  
on the prize, and now about to  
embark on his final trek.

He steps closer to the coffin, a final word --

Out of the blue, Rowlands, Czjenowski, Tiffany, and a bevy of  
Uniform Police officers, some carrying picks and shovels,  
trudge up the rise.

A portly man in a shirt and tie, the CEMETERY MANAGER, along with the Supervisor, bring up the rear. The Cemetery Manager veers over to the Ground Staff, beckons them loudly.

CEMETERY MANAGER

You guys. Bring your tools. Got some bodies to dig up.

THE FUNERAL

The Minister and Mourners look up, aghast, look at the casket sitting atop the lowering device, gather closer to the casket, protecting their precious cargo.

LATER

Nearby, a small marquee set up on the lawn, FORENSICS in white disposable coveralls, booties, gloves, masks, enter and/or leave the tent.

The adjacent funeral has been abandoned - the coffin still resting on the CLD, still surrounded by the paraphernalia ...

the Mourners gathered in the near distance, voyeurs all.

A VOICE yells

VOICE (O.S.)

Another one.

This gets the Mourners seriously aroused, smart phones out in force, panning the environs, all interest in the abandoned burial quashed.

INT. UNMARKED CAR TRAVELING - DAY

Czjenowski drives Tiffany in silence.

He finally breaks the ice.

CZJENOWSKI

So, dementia, eh?

She nods.

He stares at her gum-chewing jaw, unimpressed.

CZJENOWSKI (CONT'D)

And he's only just sixty? Fuck me.  
(afterthought)

And no wife?

TIFFANY  
Died ten years or so ago.

CZJENOWSKI  
Siblings, you know, brothers et  
cetera?

TIFFANY  
Two brothers, some cousins as far  
as I know. But I've got no idea  
who. Or where. The nursing home  
might know.

CZJENOWSKI  
Check 'em out later.

They continue in silence.

He slows the vehicle, turns into an undercover parking  
station.

CZJENOWSKI (CONT'D)  
You sure you're good for this?

She nods resignedly.

INT. MORGUE - DAY

Tiffany is escorted by a DIENER assistant along the wall of  
cold, sterile-looking lockers.

Czjenowski tags along behind.

The Diener pulls out a drawer of one of the lockers, lifts up  
a sheet, exposes a cadaver, that of a deceased Ruebens.

Tiffany winces shakes her head.

TIFFANY  
Female.

Behind her, Czjenowski averts his eyes.

The Diener has a brief look at the next drawer, decides the  
better of it.

He opens a third, lifts the sheet, exposes the deceased  
Dinah, cleaned of soil, a dark strangle mark around her neck.

Tiffany shrugs, shakes her head.

Then a fourth drawer.

Tiffany's knees buckle at the sight.

Czjenowski moves in to support her ... but she soon finds her composure and shrugs him off.

EXT. CEMETERY #2 - DAY

Four MALES, (late 30s - late 40s), all in black, accompany the short Elderly Man, centre stage around a casket atop a CLD on an open grave.

A CATHOLIC PRIEST completes the ritual, turns and kisses the short Elderly Man on both cheeks, stoically moves off.

The majority of the other twenty or so Mourners cross themselves, and slowly follow in the Priest's footsteps.

Not so, the Elderly Man. He stares at the casket.

The young Males comfort him.

Tiffany, in sombre attire, low heeled footwear, single white rose in hand, approaches - but she is shunned by the Males.

The oldest of them, MALE #1, intercepts her, physically stops her approach.

MALE #1

You've got a nerve.

But she will not be denied.

She brushes past him, ignores the other Males, leans over and kisses the lid of the coffin, whispers

TIFFANY

Hell of a way to find out.

She stands again and places the single flower on the coffin.

MALE #1

How could you let this happen?

TIFFANY

Let what happen? I'm the one who took her in, gave her a life after you creeps disowned her.

MALE #1

She'd still be here if she stayed home and looked after him.

TIFFANY

That was her job, was it? Not yours? She deserved her freedom, a life of her own you know, like everyone else.

MALE #1

Instead, she got --

She ignores his outburst, goes to the Elderly Man, gently rests a hand on his shoulder.

There is no response.

On that she walks away from the scene, leaves the Males to mumble their obscenities out of earshot from any other lingering Mourners.

INT. JELNICK'S CAR - STATIONARY - DAY

Tiffany hops in the front passenger seat alongside the waiting Jelnick, fully recovered, remnants of a bruise or two on her face, heaves an exasperated sigh.

JELNICK

That bad?

TIFFANY

Godfather wannabes.

JELNICK

Misogynists?

TIFFANY

That like the Mafia?

Jelnick weighs this up.

JELNICK

You could say that, I suppose.

TIFFANY

So what happens with our dear friends, Ruebens and Hyde?

JELNICK

Hyde has his sister. Be up to her. He was no longer in prison, so he can be buried wherever.

TIFFANY

And the other one?

JELNICK

Gotta admit, poor bastard. Didn't have much going for him. No family that we know of that would want anything to do with him. Up to the state, I suppose. Funeral Assistance programme.

Tiffany is bemused.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

Pauper's funeral. Probably end up being cremated. So, it's the end of the line for his genes. Extinct.

Tiffany digests this.

TIFFANY

Good thing, maybe?

JELNICK

Sometimes it's not always the genes at fault.

TIFFANY

I think that's what that Hyde guy was getting at.

JELNICK

Not convinced it's an excuse to go around doing that sort of shit, though. Seems to be their nature.

TIFFANY

Must be some good men out there.

Jelnick deftly places a hand on Tiffany's thigh. Tiffany doesn't flinch.

JELNICK

Good luck with that.

Tiffany evaluates the inference.

TIFFANY

Yeah, well.

Jelnick starts up the car.

JELNICK

I'll drop you home.

EXT/INT. JELNICK'S CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

Jelnick's car starts along the roadway leading out of the cemetery.

Silence ...

... until they pass through the gates

JELNICK (O.S.)

That was a gutsy thing you did the other night. You'd make a good cop. Ever thought about it?

A wary look from Tiffany.

JELNICK (CONT'D)

I could show you the ropes.

An even more wary look from Tiffany.

FADE OUT.

THE END