

**GRIST For The Mill
You Can't Escape Your Path**

THE METHOD SERIES

**Written By Jerry Bader
Produced By MRPwebmedia**

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PROLOGUE

FADE IN

MONTAGE: A series of clips portray the tragic life of HIGGINS IDAHO as the voice-over retells the back-story.

PRESENT DAY: DOCTOR JOHN H. IDAHO taking notes while listening to a crying female patient lying on a black leather Le Corbusier chaise lounge in front of a large painting in the pulp fiction movie poster style (*reference Glen Orbik, Blackmailer, Sweetheart*). The painting features a semi nude woman, LORA MILL, posing in a sexy low-cut nightgown on a bed.

VOICE-OVER

You might be forgiven for thinking HIGGINS IDAHO was a small town in the Northwest; the kind of place comedian Woody Woodbury would have described as a village whose main features were a "dog with an infected ear and a cooler of hot pop." The kind of hamlet were the solitary octogenarian gas attendant with three working teeth still filled your tank, along with an extra gallon or two down the side of your car; all while giving you the wrong directions to wherever you were going.

JOHN H. IDAHO in his studio painting in the style of his Grandfather the original Higgins Idaho. The walls are covered in drawings and sketches of a woman, LORA MILL.

VOICE-OVER

In fact HIGGINS IDAHO was DOCTOR JOHN H. IDAHO, psychiatrist, at least, that was his day job.

At night IDAHO spent his time painting large canvases in the style of his namesake Grandfather, an infamous character whose paintings were used as B-movie posters and pulp fiction covers in the 1940s.

FLASHBACK: HIGGINS IDAHO, the grandfather, circa 1940, in his studio working on the painting that now hangs in his Grandson's office.

VOICE-OVER

The original HIGGINS IDAHO used wannabe actresses for models who needed to supplement their meagre acting incomes with modelling gigs that often involved more than just posing.

HIGGINS IDAHO paying LORA MILL.

VOICE-OVER

Prostitution wasn't an uncommon stepping-stone for some of the prettier stars of the early cinema, an industry that if it didn't invent workplace sexual harassment, it certainly perfected it to a fine art. When needed, IDAHO would substitute the face of his working girl models with the desired "It Girl" of the day.

HIGGINS IDAHO in his studio over-painting the face on one of his canvases while holding a photo of a famous actress with director ROMAN LENNY FAVARO looking over his shoulder.

VOICE-OVER

At one point in his career,
original IDAHO paintings sold
for thousand's of dollars, a lot
of money for the time.
Collectors and wealthy fans
would buy up the originals that
featured their favourite star,
that is, until the scandal
broke.

In 1948 one of those sleazy
Hollywood newspaper gossip
mongers reported that IDAHO used
prostitutes for models and
merely substituted their faces
with the required movie star.

A newspaper seller holds an evening edition with the
headline: "IDAHO PAINTINGS FAKE".

VOICE-OVER

Collectors, fans, and the press
were outraged and accused IDAHO
of fraud, deception,
malfeasance, sexual
exploitation, and whatever other
nasty adjectives they could
look-up in the dictionary.

Director ROMAN LENNY FAVARO and a female star watching as a
stuntwoman dressed like the star falls down a staircase.

VOICE-OVER

The whole thing was much ado
about nothing since studio
owners and directors were
substituting low-paid stunt
doubles for big stars all the
time. No studio executive would
put a high-priced asset in peril
doing dangerous stunts; that was
for the endless supply of
expendables that served as
Idaho's models.

LORA MILL'S semi nude dead body on a beach behind the
seaside home of director ROMAN LENNY FAVARO.

VOICE-OVER

The whole concocted scandal would have eventually died-down if it wasn't for the murder of one LORA MILL, actress, model, and sometime party girl to the stars.

ROMAN LENNY FAVARO hosting a wild orgy-style party with men and women in various combinations drinking and having sex.

VOICE-OVER

IDAHO was accused of the murder, and his reputation and career were ruined, despite the fact that MILL'S body was found not a hundred yards from director ROMAN LENNY FAVARO'S beachfront property.

FAVARO was being groomed by the studio to be the next great celluloid wunderkind if only his reputation as Hollywood's leading lothario could be kept in check. His wild drunken weekend parties featuring a ring of wannabe actresses paid to service both the male and female guests were legendary.

Studio press agents with the cooperation of the police covered-up any association that FAVARO had with the whole sordid mess, leaving IDAHO to carry the can.

HIGGINS IDAHO in handcuffs being led to jail by two police officers with a number of paparazzi pushing and shoving in order to get the best photograph.

VOICE-OVER

IDAHO was arrested and tried. But even with all the press hysteria nothing was ever proved. After over a year in jail IDAHO was found innocent and set free, but by that time his reputation had been smeared from Hollywood to London's West End.

HIGGINS IDAHO being released from jail followed by a clip of people burning his paintings in front of a burning building.

VOICE-OVER

Newspapers featured stories of movie stars burning his paintings in protest over the verdict. A mob even set fire to the building that housed his studio, reportedly destroying his life's work. IDAHO died penniless and broken, leaving his wife and only child, HIGGINS IDAHO JR to fend for themselves.

Idaho's wife and son standing at the graveside looking sad and broke.

VOICE-OVER

IDAHO JR managed to grow-up, get married, and have a son of his own, JOHN H. IDAHO, who revered his grandfather and the artwork he created.

And so our story begins..

FADE OUT

An Unlikely Couple

FADE IN

INTERIOR: BOBBY BLOOM'S bedroom

PRESENT DAY: VELMA DIME'S cell phone vibrates loud enough to wake her. It flops around on the bedside table like a fish out of water until she absentmindedly picks it up. She knows exactly who is calling and why: another murder to add to the City of Angels long list of murder sights.

DIME

Okay, give me five minutes to get ready.

DIME messes her already messy hair in an effort to shake away the cobwebs. She moves a long naked leg over the side of the bed trying to find her footing.

BLOOM is standing by the window already dressed looking down at the street below from the top floor of his luxury townhouse located in the newly redeveloped Circle Square Quarter. The area used to be called just "The Quarter" when it housed naive hopefuls just off the bus from nowhere.

Now you couldn't even get into the gated Circle Square community without a black American Express card, or in JOE GRIST'S case, a gold shield. Not that GRIST was a slouch when it came to money, but he wasn't in the same league as DIME'S boyfriend, the diminutive BOBBY BLOOM, the ex French spy with lucrative studio connections.

GRIST seemed to have his share of dough, especially for a cop; a fact that led to all kinds of rumours about how he managed to live so well on a policeman's salary. But nothing ever stuck to GRIST, maybe because he was innocent, or maybe because he was smart.

BLOOM

You know he's been waiting five minutes already..

DIME

Shit, I gotta get going.

DIME had been GRIST'S partner for almost a year, and although they'd gotten off to a rough start, they were actually a good team. Her early intention was to dump him as soon as they were paired, but after a while she found working together was easy.

Sure they still gave each other a hard time, but more like an old married couple rather than anything else. She liked GRIST and thought his reputation was unfounded. If she wasn't in a heated relationship with the little Frenchman, GRIST might be a very acceptable second choice.

DIME brushes her teeth, runs a quick shower, and slips on what amounted to her usual wardrobe: black slacks, white cotton shirt open at the neck, a shoulder holster that carried her 38 Special, and a black soft as butter calfskin jacket to finish the look. No matter how hard she tried to dress like a tough guy, she always managed to look sexy; some women don't even have to try, and she was one of them.

GRIST spots DIME coming out of the townhouse. He opens the door of his car for his partner. As she gets in he gives her a wink.

DIME

Don't start!

GRIST

I just hope you're not too worn-out to work...

DIME

Cut the crap and fill me in.

GRIST

Testy this morning, are we?

DIME just gives him a look.

GRIST

Dead body, female, about twenty-five to thirty, found on the beach in guess whose backyard?

DIME

Come on JOE, I'm still half asleep, and in no mood for twenty questions.

GRIST

Okay, take it easy... The lucky owner of a brand, spanking new, dead body is non other than mister sleaze ball himself, SEYMOUR KRATZ, President of Bernardo Productions, and husband to CLAIRE KRATZ the nominal head of hubby's talent pimping agency.

DIME

This should be interesting.

GRIST

Oh for sure. It seems the KRATZS' held one of their infamous weekend get-togethers and one would surmise that our dead body was part of the entertainment.

GRIST and DIME pull up in front of the KRATZS' Malibu beachfront property, duck under the yellow police tape and enter the house. They work their way to the back and down to the beach. After a look at the body, and a quick rundown from the Medical Examiner's people they head back to the house to question the KRATZS'.

KRATZ and his wife are sitting on a white couch sipping coffee. GRIST and DIME take seats in the matching couch opposite the KRATZS'.

GRIST

The woman on the beach was at your party last night?

SEYMOUR

Yes, she was one of our guests.

DIME

We'll need a list of everyone that was here.

SEYMOUR

Not a problem, CLAIRE will email you the list.

GRIST

So what can you tell us about
the young lady on the beach?

CLAIRE

She was a client, an actress.

GRIST

Name?

CLAIRE

LIZZIE SHORT, she had a couple
of walk-ons on that Doctor
series. I think she played a
dead body once.

GRIST

Typecasting?

DIME

Kind of a high-octane
environment for a lowly wannabe...

SEYMOUR

She had her talents.

DIME

I'll bet: entertainment for the
big shots?

SEYMOUR

Don't be so parochial DETECTIVE
DIME; it's a who you know
business.

If she got up close and personal
with the wrong guy, that's none
of my affair. I just make the
connections; you never know what
can happen.

GRIST

Yeah, like murder!

SEYMOUR

Listen, we were just the hosts. We don't know anything about any murder. Guests come and go. They take-over the whole house; sometimes they wander out on the beach; we don't know what they do out there.

DIME

I've got a pretty good idea.

SEYMOUR

They're all consenting adults, Detective. What they do is none of my business.

GRIST

Yeah, you said that already.

DIME

You work for ARNIE BERNARDO don't you? People around him seem to turn up dead quite often.

SEYMOUR

ARNIE'S a married man now. If you were married to LONNIE, would you waste your time with someone like SHORT? Besides everything is on the up-and-up since the accident and the unfortunate demise of CARMINE DESALVO.

DIME

Unfortunate for who?

GRIST

Was ARNIE here last night?

SEYMOUR

Sure, everybody was here, even that shrink, IDAHO.

DIME

We'll need that list.

SEYMOUR

Sure, sure... I always co-operate
with our men and women in blue,
especially if they're as lovely
as DETECTIVE DIME.

GRIST

I'd be careful with that mouth
of your's KRATZ, her boyfriend
carries a gun.

DIME looks at CLAIRE with pity in her eyes.

DIME

How do you put up with him?

CLAIRE doesn't answer. GRIST gets up so he's standing over
KRATZ in an intimidating manner.

GRIST

Stay in town, and get us that
list. Understand?

FADE OUT

Everything That's Old Is New Again

FADE IN

INTERIOR: Flashback of the KRATZ'S beachfront property during the 1940s when it was owned by ROMAN LENNY FAVARO, lover of all things depraved, including a taste for rough sex with unemployed starlets.

A wild party is going on with people drinking, dancing, and engaging in various lascivious acts without much regard to where they are or with whom they are with. A drunken FAVARO is in his bedroom with a just as drunk LORA MILL. She is drinking and undressing with FAVARO watching.

MILL

When can I get the script?

FAVARO

Sorry honey, the studio overruled me. They're pushing that blond with the peek-a-boo haircut.

MILL

What the hell ROMAN, you promised?

FAVARO

Next time baby, I'll get you a part in the next one

MILL

How do you expect me to support little LORA if you can't get me a job? She's your kid too you know!

FAVARO

Not my problem sweetie. Besides... you do your best work on your back... so let's rehearse.

MILL stops undressing, angrily grabs her dress from the bedside chair and begins to put it back on. FAVARO grabs it from her ripping it in the process.

MILL

Fuck you ROMAN!

FAVARO

That's the whole idea, so get
with the program.

FAVARO grabs her by the throat, but MILL knees him in the groin. The director falls to his knees groaning. MILL, half-naked, grabs her torn dress and runs out the open glass door that leads to a wooden deck, with stairs down to the beach. No one in the living room hears the commotion as they're otherwise engaged.

FAVARO staggers to his feet, angrily grabs a razor sharp letter opener off a pile of unread scripts on his bedside table, and stumbles out into the night looking for MILL.

MILL tries to get to the front of the house but the gate is locked. The beach is dark and she's disoriented, so she just starts running. She runs smack into FAVARO. For a split second they're both stunned, their eyes meet. MILL turns to run but FAVARO grabs for her with his free hand, causing the two of them to stumble. FAVARO loses his balance. He puts his hands out to brace his fall but he lands on top of her, plunging the letter opener deep into her neck. The beach is silent except for the noise coming from the party, and a single final groan from MILL. Blood flows slowly from her neck onto the sand creating a dark red halo around her head.

FAVARO staggers to his feet.

FAVARO

Get up you slut... get up!

He stares down at the letter opener in the neck of the limp body of the former actress, model, and sometime party girl, LORA MILL. FAVARO pulls the opener from her neck, turns, and throws it as far as he can into the Pacific Ocean.

PRESENT DAY: Cut to a photograph of a dead LIZZIE SHORT on the KRATZ'S backyard beach. DIME and GRIST are sitting facing each other with two wooden desks pushed back-to-back between them. The desks are piled high with files and crime scene photographs. DIME picks up the photographs.

DIME

JOE, take a look at this picture.

GRIST

Yeah, so, I've seen it, it's the crime scene shot of LIZZIE SHORT.

DIME

Think it looks familiar?

GRIST picks up the photograph to give it a look.

GRIST

They all start to look alike after a while. You'll get use to it.

DIME

No, no... not like this, look at it again.

GRIST looks down at the photograph.

GRIST

Sure it looks familiar, she's dead. We're homicide cops.

DIME

God you're stubborn. For Christ sake look harder.

GRIST looks again.

GRIST

You mean the old MILL'S case? Jesus... that was before you were born; how the hell do you even know about it?

DIME

You think there's a connection? Look at the neck wound?

GRIST

I guess it's worth a look-see.
Have ALVAREZ pull everything
we've got on the LORA MILL'S
murder. You never know... you
might have stumbled on
something.

DIME

Listen can we start on that in
the morning, tonight's BOBBY'S
big opening.

GRIST

No problem, it'll take ALVAREZ a
while to dig out all that
ancient stuff anyway. This is
going to be old school police
work with actual paper reports.

DIME

You're coming tonight aren't
you? It'll mean a lot to have
you there... I could use the moral
support.

GRIST

You kidding? You think I'd miss
a chance to see you in some sexy
low-cut number.

DIME smiles.

DIME

You may be disappointed.

GRIST

Not with you kid, never with
you...

So, I guess BLOOM will pull out
his best cashmere turtleneck...
probably wear it with a tux and
his favourite Barak.

DIME laughs.

BOBBY BLOOM always dressed the same. A cashmere turtleneck and a custom Savile Row suit with his favourite Barak SP21 tucked away in a leather shoulder holster.

DIME

You're probably right.

FADE OUT

A Paint Job

FADE IN

INTERIOR: HIGGINS IDAHO'S studio

FLASHBACK: FAVARO is standing with HIGGINS IDAHO and his wife in his studio looking at a painting of LORA MILL. FAVARO hands IDAHO a photograph of the female lead in his next movie.

FAVARO

Replace LORA'S face with this one. She's the studio's next great piece of ass.

IDAHO looks at the photograph and goes to pull out another large canvas.

IDAHO

I got another canvas I think would work better.

While his back is turned FAVARO slips IDAHO'S wife a note.

NOTE (FAVARO'S VOICE)

"Meet me at the beach house tomorrow, 1:00 PM. He'll be busy all day with this job. - Roman"

IDAHO finds the painting he's looking for. He pulls it out to show FAVARO.

IDAHO

What do you think?

FAVARO

Yeah that'll work. As long as it's nice and sleazy with lots of skin and it's done by Friday.

IDAHO

Friday? That's impossible! You want more cleavage I've got to change the dress as well as the face.

FAVARO

Yeah... so?

IDAHO

I'll have to work around the clock for the next couple of days to get it done.

FAVARO

So what? Charge the studio a little extra... just get it done.

IDAHO looks at his wife.

IDAHO

Is that okay with you dear?

IDAHO'S WIFE

Sure honey, take all the time you need, but make sure you charge them enough. We could use some new drapes.

FAVARO

Charge whatever you want. Just make sure you deliver it by Friday.

With IDAHO busy in the studio, his wife was free to spend the next two days with FAVARO at the beach house.

FADE OUT

The Opening

FADE IN

INTERIOR: BOBBY BLOOM'S Montmartre Gallery Bistro

The painting of LORA MILL that HIGGINS talked FAVARO out of using is now hanging in BOBBY BLOOM'S Montmartre Gallery Bistro. It's opening night and everyone who is anyone is there. The guest list features Hollywood bigwigs, ex gangsters, art collectors, and high society matrons. The hosts are ex DGSE spook, BOBBY BLOOM and his lovely homicide detective girlfriend, VELMA DIME.

The restaurant is an eclectic combination of Rennie Mackintosh furniture, and copies of the infamous HIGGINS IDAHO pulp fiction movie poster paintings. The canvases were reportedly painted by IDAHO'S grandson, the noted celebrity psychiatrist. It was rumoured that one or more of the paintings were originals, adding an extra element of intrigue to the event, not that the opening needed any additional publicity.

The party is in full throttle, a jazz quartet is playing Brubeck's 'Blue Rondo a la Turk' while waiters in white shirts and black slacks scurry about carrying buckets of Dom Perignon and large platters filled with French delicacies. BLOOM is working the room making sure all his studio contacts are well looked after. After all, it's their generous retainers that paid for BLOOM'S expensive epicurean art hobby.

DETECTIVE JOE GRIST dressed in an expensive black custom-made suit, white shirt, vertically striped silk tie, and a gold Omega watch, walks into the party. He spots BLOOM talking to ARNIE and LONNIE BERNARDO. BERNARDO, ex gangster and tough guy, is Chairman of Hollywood's hottest production company, SEYMOUR KRATZ'S boss, and a frequent user of the Frenchman's unique talents. BLOOM waves GRIST over to the table.

BLOOM

JOE, you know ARNIE and his wife, LONNIE, don't you?

GRIST

Sure. We talked when old CARMINE disappeared leaving nothing but a big red stain on his carpet.

BLOOM

Play nice *mon ami*, it's a party.

GRIST

VELMA already warned me to behave.

BLOOM excuses himself and moves off to talk to some people at the next table. GRIST pulls out a chair and joins the BERNARDO'S.

GRIST

I hear congratulations are in order.

BERNARDO

Yeah, I demanded LONNIE make an honest man out of me.

LONNIE laughs. GRIST already knows the answer, but he asks anyway.

GRIST

Were you two at KRATZ'S place on the weekend?

BERNARDO

Yeah, we had to go, the creep works for us.

GRIST

Did you know the girl that got killed, LIZZIE SHORT?

BERNARDO

Sure I've seen her around, she's always at KRATZ'S parties.

GRIST

Did you notice anything suspicious?

BERNARDO shrugs.

LONNIE

She was all up-close and personal with that psychiatrist.

GRIST

Interesting...

BERNARDO

Now there's a story, looking for a movie.

GRIST

What do you mean?

BERNARDO

This IDAHO character's got quite the history. Word is, dear old granddad beat a murder rap.

LONNIE

Kinda odd he hooks up with a party girl with a name like LIZZIE SHORT.

GRIST

Explain...

LONNIE

Elizabeth Short, The Black Dahlia, Jesus JOE, you're the detective.

GRIST

How the hell did I miss that?

BERNARDO

I don't want to spoil your fun... but if I were you, I'd take a closer look at some of these paintings.

GRIST

Yeah I know, everyone thinks one of them is an original. The way people are acting you'd think they'd win a prize if they discover which one.

BERNARDO

Take a close look JOE, you might
find more than you expected.

GRIST'S head is spinning and he hasn't even had a drink yet. The dead woman was using the alias of the most infamous murder victim in LA history. And she was cozing up to the grandson of a guy tried for murder. This case was getting weird. Why can't LA murders be ordinary like every place else: arrest the spouse and call it a day.

GRIST spots DIME perching herself on a stool at the bar. She looks incredibly good in a tight low-cut red dress, with a side-slit up to her thigh, a detail that draws extra attention as she carefully crosses her long legs. GRIST moves to the bar to greet his partner.

GRIST

How come you don't wear that
outfit to the office?

DIME laughs.

DIME

Wouldn't want to scare the
horses... Besides you're not
looking too shabby yourself.

GRIST

Listen, BERNARDO, gave me some
background on this SHORT woman.
And there seems to be some kind
of link to this IDAHO character.

DIME

How so?

GRIST

I'll fill you in tomorrow, but
right now I need your help to
check something out.

DIME

JOE, I can't leave, BOBBY will
be pissed.

GRIST

All you got to do is help me
look at these paintings.

DIME

Okay, that's easy, what are we
looking for?

GRIST

Beats the hell out of me?
BERNARDO made a big thing out of
looking at these paintings with
a fine toothcomb.

DIME holds out her hand for GRIST to help her off the
barstool. Together they make the rounds looking at each
painting very carefully. After doing the complete circuit
they end up back at the bar. DIME leans back against the
bar. GRIST is seeing DIME in a whole new light and he's
jealous. DIME senses GRIST'S male instincts clicking in.

DIME

JOE, You know I'm with BOBBY.

GRIST

Guess I missed my chance.

DIME pushes herself off the bar and kisses GRIST on the
cheek.

DIME

Things can change.
Never say never...

GRIST

Holy SHIT!

DIME

What?

GRIST

We've been staring at it all
night... the painting behind the
bar.

DIME turns around and focuses on the face in the painting.

DIME

Mother Fucker!

The other people at the bar all turn around to look at who's using the colourful language. They shake their heads with a combination of humour and disgust; then return to their drinks.

BOBBY BLOOM notices the minor kerfuffle and joins GRIST and DIME at the bar just in time to hear his girlfriend's colourful turn of phrase.

DIME

That's our dead body.

BLOOM

Actually it's not. Not unless she died twice. That's the original IDAHO, painted in 1947.

GRIST and DIME just look at one another.

FADE OUT

The Plot Thickens

FADE IN

INTERIOR: Detective squad room.

GRIST is sitting in his chair with DIME perched legs crossed on the side of his desk. Both are back to their usual working attire. GRIST has already filled his partner in with what he learned the night before from the BERNARDOS.

ALVAREZ joins GRIST and DIME carrying two boxes of files. He drops the files on DIME'S desk raising a cloud of dust, causing GRIST to sneeze all over them.

DIME

You know it's a criminal offence to tamper with evidence.

GRIST

Very funny...

ALVAREZ

You kids have fun. And don't ever ask me to go into those archives again. Not unless you're going to buy me a year's supply of antihistamines.

DIME

Okay partner what are we looking for?

GRIST

What's LIZZIE SHORT'S real name? Why did she use the Black Dahlia as a pseudonym?

DIME

Who's the woman in the painting? What's her connection to SHORT?

GRIST

And how do IDAHO and his
grandfather figure into all
this?

DIME

Why don't we ever get a nice
simple crime of passion?

GRIST

What a cluster-fuck.

DIME

You take that pile and I'll take
this one.

Grist takes off his jacket and roles up his sleeves. The two detectives dig into the files looking for anything that connects the dots. ALVAREZ is standing by a file cabinet in the corner.

ALVAREZ

LIZZIE SHORT'S name change and
birth certificate are right on
top of the second box.

DIME and GRIST both grab for the file at the same time but DIME gets there first.

DIME

LIZZIE SHORT, born LORA M.
SUTTON. She changed her name to
SHORT when she started acting.

GRIST

Why pick ELIZABETH SHORT? That's
really strange. Let's cross-
reference her real name with
other murders and the IDAHO
family.

DIME starts entering information into the computer and before she even finishes files start popping up.

DIME

Holy shit!

GRIST jumps up and quickly moves to DIMES side of the two desks leaning close over her shoulder.

GRIST
God you smell good.

DIME
Come on JOE stop fooling around.

GRIST sighs and raises his gaze to the screen in front of them.

GRIST
Her grandmother was LORA MILL,
the actress-hooker who was
murdered at the FAVARO beach
house. LORA M. SUTTON is LORA
MILL SUTTON.

DIME
Look at the address!

GRIST
That's KRATZ'S place.

DIME
What are the chances?

GRIST
Absolutely zero. Our murder is
linked to the old MILL'S murder.

DIME
And guess who beat the murder
rap?

GRIST
HIGGINS-FUCKIN-IDAHO

DIME
The Black Dahlia reference was
her way of telling the world not
to forget her grandmother's
murder. Now we know why SHORT
was making eyes at the shrink.

GRIST
Look at this?

GRIST points to another file on the screen.

GRIST

SHORT'S grandfather was FAVARO.
She's the daughter of FAVARO'S
bastard love child... I wonder if
the sleaze ball son-of-a-bitch
is still around?

DIME

It says here, he was in a
retirement home for movie types;
but he died a week prior to the
KRATZ'S party... very convenient
if you ask me.

GRIST

How'd he die?

DIME

It says accidental. Supposedly
he took an overdose of his heart
medication by mistake... at least
that's the way it was ruled.

GRIST

This case has far too many
coincidences for my taste.

GRIST picks up his phone and starts to dial.

DIME

Who you calling?

GRIST

LONNIE BERNARDO.

DIME looks puzzled.

GRIST

Hi LONNIE, it's JOE GRIST... we
talked at BLOOM'S shindig last
night.

You said you saw SHORT come on
to IDAHO at KRATZ'S party...
right? (pause)

Really... you think it might have been the other way around.

Thanks LONNIE, you've been a big help. Bye.

DIME

This is some real-life Raymond Chandler shit.

GRIST

You're telling me.

If I remember correctly FAVARO was a real lady's man. He screwed his way through half of Hollywood.

DIME

He must have pissed off a lot of young ladies... especially SHORT'S grandma.

We know SHORT'S connected to FAVARO; I wonder if FAVARO was connected to IDAHO?

GRIST

He had to be. The painting at BOBBY'S place must have been MILL. So that connects MILL to IDAHO and IDAHO to FAVARO.

Come on we're going for a ride.

GRIST grabs his jacket and the two detectives head for the door.

DIME

Where we going?

GRIST

Let's check out that retirement home and see if we can find out if FAVARO had any visitors.

FADE OUT

Home Sweet Dead

FADE IN

INTERIOR: The Burbank Entertainment Retirement Home

GRIST and DIME enter the retirement home and show their badges to the receptionist who ushers them into the Executive Director's office. The Director is a paunchy, balding, middle-aged man with the phony smile of a life insurance salesman and the weak, sweaty handshake of a rookie used car dealer.

DIRECTOR

How can I help you fine young officers?

GRIST

That's Detectives, and we're investigating a murder.

DIRECTOR

A murder?

DIME

Maybe two... maybe one happened right under your shiny red nose.

DIRECTOR

There must be some mistake. I can't imagine...

GRIST

Oh, we can imagine all kinds of things...

DIME

Murder, assisted suicide...

GRIST

Neglect, incompetence...

The DIRECTOR'S head swivels back and forth between the two cops, not sure what's going on.

DIME

All kinds of trouble for you my friend... I mean taking advantage of old people is bad enough, but over-dosing them to clear some beds so you can raise your prices... well that's just not nice...

GRIST

Just imagine what the papers will do when they here the rumours...

GRIST leans forward onto the DIRECTOR'S desk, his face only about twelve inches from the sweaty little man. GRIST just stares while his partner turns up the verbal barrage.

DIME

You know partner, I've heard it said that when retirement homes murder old people, it puts a real damper on business.

GRIST

A real damper...

DIRECTOR

Now just a minute here...

DIME

What do you think JOE? Should we cut our friend a break?

GRIST

Well, if he co-operates, we might be able to keep his name out of it. When it's over maybe he could get another cushy job like this one in some shitty dump... like Dexter, New Mexico.

DIME

Sounds like an appropriate place for someone linked to two murders.

DIRECTOR

I'm cooperating. Whatever you need, ask. Just tell me what you want. Anything...

GRIST

Get on that expensive nifty computer you got there and print out a list of everyone who visited ROMAN FAVARO in the last two years.

DIRECTOR

FAVARO? That was ruled accidental.

DIME

Accidentally on purpose, you mean.

GRIST

The list! Now! And while you're at it, I want the names of every employee that had any contact with FAVARO during his stay here at your fine establishment.

The DIRECTOR hands DIME several pages of printout with the names of all the staff that had contact with FAVARO. While DIME is looking over the list he hands GRIST a single page printout with one name repeated twelve times.

DIRECTOR

Here's the visitor list.

GRIST

What the fuck is this? There's only one name? Where's the rest of it?

DIRECTOR

That's it. She was the only one that ever visited him. He wasn't a very nice man.

GRIST hands DIME the piece of paper. Her eyes dilate; the name LIZZIE SHORT, repeated twelve times is all that's on the paper.

DIRECTOR

She visited once a month for the past year.

DIME

Yeah... the last entry is the day he died.

GRIST and DIME leave the Executive Director to sweat, and head back to the office.

GRIST

Sounds like she spent the year getting him to trust her..

"Hi Grandpa, you don't know me, but you killed Grandma after you knocked her up, and left dear old Mommy, your daughter, to grow-up all alone. Now I'm here to return the favour."

DIME

And when the time was right...
WAMMO! A double dose of heart medication... ain't karma a bitch.

GRIST

So who killed SHORT and why?

FADE OUT

A Pictures Worth A Thousand Words

FADE IN

INTERIOR: DOCTOR JOHN H. IDAHO'S studio.

FLASHBACK: The room is covered with paintings, drawings, and sketches all over the walls and strewn about the floor. Most of them are of LORA MILL. IDAHO is working on a painting of his grandfather and grandmother. The painting is large, about four by eight, and it rests on one of those large wooden artist easels. The painting is not the usual pinup style but rather more reminiscent of the sugar coated style of Norman Rockwell.

IDAHO is having trouble getting his grandmother's face just right. He gets up from the wooden stool he's sitting on and goes to the roll-top desk in the corner of the room. He pushes aside the numerous sketches lying on the desk, opens the roll-top, and pulls out an old worn leather photo album with the words "THE IDAHO'S" gold embossed on the cover.

He leafs through the pages until he finds a photograph of his Grandfather, Grandmother, and a handsome bohemian-looking man. All three are grouped around a painting of LORA MILL. IDAHO pulls the photo from the album and turns it over. On the back is a partially faded hand written note in his Grandfather's script: "*Me, Mother, and the bastards.*"

IDAHO

The bastards?

IDAHO puts the photograph down and starts rummaging through the desk until he finds a tattered old diary that belonged to his Grandmother. The diary has a lock, but the key has long since been lost. He stares at the book for a moment, then, violently rips the flimsy lock off.

He shuffles through the pages noticing many have been torn out. A folded yellowing piece of what was once expensive letterhead falls to the floor. IDAHO picks it up, and unfolds it. At the top are three ostentatious raised black initials "RLF," below is a handed written note:

NOTE (FAVARO'S VOICE)

"Meet me at the beach house
tomorrow, 1:00 PM. He'll be busy
all day with this job. - Roman"

IDAHO picks up the photograph of his Grandfather, his Grandmother pregnant with his Father, and ROMAN FAVARO. He refolds the note, and places both the note and the photograph in his shirt pocket.

He looks at his watch and realizes that he needs to start getting ready for the KRATZ'S party.

FADE OUT

History Repeats Itself

FADE IN

INTERIOR: KRATZ'S weekend beach retreat the night of LIZZIE SHORT'S murder.

FLASHBACK: The guests are all talking, drinking and socializing. A well-known Vegas performer is sitting atop a large white baby grand piano, delighting the guests with filthy versions of popular hit songs.

DOC IDAHO is at the bar drinking heavily while entertaining several fellow partiers by scribbling caricatures of them on expensive white linen napkins. Every so often an attractive young starlet adjourns to the bedroom followed by one of the more influential male guests.

DOC IDAHO keeps an eye on the parade of horny Hollywood hopefuls as he casually sketches his fellow drinkers. One young woman, the last to enter the bedroom, looks particularly interesting.

As he hands a napkin with an amusing image to one of the delighted guests he spots the woman and her short-term paramour rejoining the party.

He excuses himself and approaches the woman who is still adjusting her clothes after what must have been a hurried romantic interlude.

DOC IDAHO

Hi there, I'm JOHN IDAHO.

SHORT

Yes I know, the psychiatrist.

DOC IDAHO

Perhaps you need a break, but if you're not too tired..

SHORT

That's why I'm here DOC.

IDAHO follows SHORT into what used to be ROMAN FAVARO'S bedroom. He closes the door behind them as they enter the room. SHORT turns her back to IDAHO..

SHORT

DOC, can you unzip me?

IDAHO takes something out of his shirt pocket. He walks up to SHORT whose back is turned waiting. He unzips her dress, puts one arm around her waist pulling her close. He kisses her ear making her giggle. With his other hand he shows her what he took out of his pocket: the photograph of his Grandparents, ROMAN FAVARO, and the painting of LORA MILL. She looks down.

SHORT

What's this, family photo time?

DOC IDAHO

Take a close look.

SHORT tries to extract herself from his grip, but he pulls her tighter against his body.

DOC IDAHO

Look Bitch! Take a real good look.

SHORT

What the fuck is this?

DOC IDAHO

LOOK AT IT!

SHORT

The painting... that's your Grandmother...

DOC IDAHO

Don't you recognize Granddad?

SHORT is scared. She tries to pull away but he grabs her dress ripping it half off as she struggles to get away. They stumble onto the bed with SHORT on top of him. She frees herself from his grip and races for the open glass patio doors that lead to the wooden deck with steps down to the beach. IDAHO gets to his feet. He spots a letter opener on top of a pile of scripts beside the bed. He grabs the opener and heads out the patio doors after her.

SHORT tries to get to the front of the house but the gate is locked. She tries to scream but only a feeble hoarse croaking sound comes out.

SHORT
Help! Somebody help me...

It's dark, she's scared, half naked and disoriented. She turns and runs toward the water. She can hardly see where she's going. She turns to get her bearings and smacks right into IDAHO.

IDAHO
FAVARO BITCH!

SHORT tries to scream but her calls for help are completely drowned out by the party, and the sound of the Pacific Ocean. IDAHO knocks her to the ground falling on top of her as he plunges the letter opener deep into her neck. She reaches up with one hand scratching his upper chest as she loses consciousness. IDAHO is on his knees straddling her. He just stares down at her for a few seconds. He staggers to his feet as the edge of a wave gently washes over the signs of struggle.

IDAHO
That's the fucking end.
No more FAVARO'S.

FADE OUT

**You Can Pick Your Friends
But You Can't Pick Your Family**

FADE IN

INTERIOR: GRIST and DIME are at their desks looking over a variety of files and photographs.

GRIST

We pretty much know SHORT killed FAVARO because he got away with killing MILL.

DIME

It looks that way, but he was her Grandfather... her only living relative.

GRIST

Yeah, the bastard killed her Grandmother, after banging her for fun and disowning his own daughter, SHORT'S mother. I'd say that's motive enough.

DIME

Okay... so who killed SHORT?

GRIST reaches into a box containing evidence; he pulls out a plastic evidence bag containing a white linen napkin with a caricature of LIZZIE SHORT, and the initials JHI under it. He tosses the bag across his desk to DIME. She looks down.

GRIST

The only other commonality is IDAHO. He's got to be involved. He keeps popping up all-over this thing.

DIME

Connect the dots...

GRIST

SHORT'S Grandmother was screwing FAVARO...

DIME

She was a hooker. She was screwing everybody.

GRIST

Maybe IDAHO'S Grandfather?

DIME

So what? Where's the motive.

GRIST

Granddad IDAHO'S life was ruined when he got arrested for the MILL'S murder.

DIME

But he was found not guilty...

GRIST

You've seen the newspaper clippings from the trial. The press convicted him long before the verdict.

DIME

So IDAHO kills SHORT because she's FAVARO'S Granddaughter?

GRIST

IDAHO obviously recognized SHORT from the paintings of MILL. He figured if Granddad didn't kill MILL it must have been FAVARO.

DIME

Straight-up revenge.

GRIST

I guess it's time we saw a shrink.

DIME

I've been telling you that for months.

GRIST

Everybody's a comedian in this town.

DIME

Come on Tonto, let's ride.

GRIST

Okay "kemosabe" but take the
napkin.

DIME grabs the evidence bag and tosses it to GRIST. The two
detectives head for the door and IDAHO'S townhouse.

FADE OUT

The Last Picture Show

FADE IN

INTERIOR: DOC IDAHO'S townhouse

A secretary ushers GRIST and DIME into IDAHO'S empty office. The Secretary picks up the phone on the desk and presses a button.

SECRETARY

Doctor, there are two police
detectives here to see you.
Yes Sir, I'll send them up.

The Secretary hangs up the phone and turns to the two cops.

SECRETARY

The Doctor is in his studio on
the third floor. You can go
right up.

GRIST and DIME climb the stairs and enter a large third floor studio filled with paintings, drawings and sketches. They can't help but notice how many are of MILL or SHORT. It's hard to tell which is which.

IDAHO is over-painting a canvas that once featured his grandparents but now the image of the woman has been obliterated with wild splashes of paint giving the canvas an odd mixture of representational and abstract styles. The two detectives look at the painting, IDAHO, and then each other.

IDAHO

Please sit, if you can find a
place.

GRIST and DIME continue to walk around the room looking at all the images of MILL and SHORT. The scene is decidedly creepy considering both women are dead.

GRIST

You were at the KRATZ'S party a
while back?

IDAHO

Of course, the KRATZ'S are friends.

DIME

Are they patients?

IDAHO

Now detective you know I can't talk about my patients.

GRIST

How about LIZZIE SHORT?

IDAHO

Who?

GRIST reaches into his jacket and pulls out the evidence bag with the napkin drawing of LIZZIE SHORT and waves it in front of IDAHO.

GRIST

Recognize this?

IDAHO

I must have done at least a dozen of those that night. People get a kick out of it, kind of a party-favor.

DIME

The woman... you know her?

IDAHO

Not really... they're always lots of her kind at these parties.

DIME

Her kind?

IDAHO

You know what I mean...

GRIST

Not really, why don't you tell us.

IDAHO

She was a hooker. She must've
screwed half the men at the
party.

DIME

She screw you?

IDAHO pauses searching for an answer. He feels like she did
screw him, but not in the way the cops meant. He doesn't
like being cross-examined, and he's slowly losing his
composure. The cops sense he's ready for the kill.

GRIST

It's not a hard question. I
would have remembered a nice
looking girl like LIZZIE SHORT.

IDAHO

She wasn't a nice girl... none of
them were nice...

DIME

None of them?

IDAHO

She was a whore just like her
Grandmother... a plague like her
Grandfather.

GRIST

So you killed her.

IDAHO looks from one cop to the other. His mission is
complete; it's over, and he knows it. His whole life has
been dedicated to the moment he could rid the world of the
last FAVARO. He doesn't care they know. LIZZIE SHORT is
dead. FAVARO is dead. He's avenged his Grandfather.

IDAHO

They ruined my Grandfather. He
was a brilliant artist, rich,
successful, a man of substance;
and FAVARO ruined everything.

She was his seed and she had to be destroyed, they all had to be destroyed, wiped off the face of the earth so they couldn't hurt anybody else.

Did I kill her? You're fuck'in right I killed her! I did the world a service.

Fuck'em... They're all gone now. I'm free... the world's free... free of a sick, disgusting pestilence.

The words rush out in a heated torrent of rage and anger. When he's finished he just sags, exhausted, and mentally spent.

IDAHO

I had to put an end to them. I had no choice. I owed it to my Grandfather.

GRIST walks around behind IDAHO, and cuffs him, while DIME reads him his rights.

DIME

You have the right to remain silent, anything you say, can and will be used against you in a court of law; you have the right to a lawyer, if you can't afford a lawyer, one will be provided for you...

FADE OUT

Epilogue

FADE IN

INTERIOR: The police station.

GRIST and DIME are packing up the case files when ALVAREZ interrupts them with one more file.

ALVAREZ

They just sent over the DNA results for the SHORT case.

GRIST

Let's have a look.

GRIST opens the file and reads for a second; a wry smile crosses his face.

GRIST

You've got to be kidding.

DIME

What's it say?

GRIST hands DIME the report on the epithelial cells found under SHORT'S fingernails from when she scratched IDAHO.

DIME looks at the report wide-eyed, and then at GRIST.

DIME

They're related..

GRIST

FAVARO was their Grandfather.

DIME

Both of them..

He was screwing MILL and IDAHO'S Grandmother. That makes him a FAVARO.

GRIST

I guess IDAHO miscalculated the end of the FAVARO line.

DIME

I'd love to see his face when he
sees this.

SIX MONTHS LATER

INTERIOR: IDAHO'S prison cell.

A prison guard making the rounds hears an odd sound coming from IDAHO'S cell. He makes his way to the cell. DOCTOR JOHN HIGGINS IDAHO has a bed sheet wrapped around his neck; the other end is tied to the bars. His body is limp, only being supported by the sheet around his neck. On the floor is a letter from his lawyer and a copy of the DNA report on the epithelial cells found under SHORT'S fingernails.

FADE OUT

