

**STRIKE A POSE**

Feature Film

Written by Thomas Pollart

Originally titled

**STAMPEDE BY LIGHTNING**

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**EXT.** TWILIGHT, A COWBOY ON HORSE BACK RIDING WITH LONG HORNS IN A RAIN STORM, A BRIGHT FLASH OF LIGHTNING GIVES LIGHT TO THE DRAMA BEFORE DISSOLVING INTO FREDERIC REMINGTON'S PAINTING, 'STAMPEDE BY LIGHTNING'.

**Graphic-** Stampede by Lightning

'Nothing is a more desperate deed than running in the night with long horns ... all as mad as the thunder and lightning above.'

- Frederic Remington



**NOTE-** Painting housed at the Gilcrease Museum, Tulsa, OK, where prints on canvas are available & easily enhanced as the original.

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**EXT.** EARLY MORNING, BREEZY, COASTAL FLORIDA, HWY A1A. THE ATLANTIC'S HORIZON AWASH WITH DISTANT, OMINOUS STORM CLOUDS.

**Graphic-** January 1972, Saturday morning, South Lauderdale, Florida.

KAREN, 22ish, tanned, sky blue doe eyes, captivating full brows & lashes, lanky, natural full figure curves, waitress fit, pressed yellow bell-bottoms, anatomy fitting black V-neck tee shirt. Long, thick, tousled brown hair, partially braided & loosely cinched with a paisley red scarf.

She's sitting on a white washed bench looking north with anticipation, blindly cleaning, using her tee shirt, a smudge on her big movie star sunglasses. Finished, resunglasses & fishes out a pack of cigarettes from her large tote bag. Separates a Howard Johnsons matchbook from the cellophane wrapper & match lights a cigarette.

**CUT TO:**

**EXT.** A shiny 1969 Lincoln Continental, hardtop, suicide doors, front windows rolled down, motoring south along coastal Hwy A1A. Shops & cafes align the west side of the road, the ocean & beach with palm trees testing the breeze to the east.

**INT.** JACK, driving, 35ish, sharp features, thick brows above

Wayfarer sunglasses, tanned, economics thin but fit, slicked backed generous hair, navy sport coat over an un-tucked short sleeve, dress shirt, khaki pants, slipping in & out of light traffic as a cover of Herbie Hancock's, 'Cantaloupe Island' plays on the cassette deck. A large duffel, a lengthwise rolled towel & a Panama straw hat, sit back seat riding visible.

He blindly reaches for a dark, iced drink, 16oz Dolphins game cup. A circumspect first drink; winces strong & deftly returns it to the center consul cup holder next to a large screwdriver.

Smiling, peeps & slow passes two leggy, female roller-skaters, short shorts, rolling along the beach side, sidewalk. Distracted, suddenly brakes, honks & swerves, nearly hitting two teen-age boys crossing the road on ten-speed bicycles.

**EXT.** Eventually we see KAREN ahead, now curb standing, her big bag shouldered, leaning in on one hip, her V-neck tee shirt too small embellishing generous curves. She raises a hitchhiker's thumb, JACK acknowledges with two short horn taps, pulls over, leans across & offers open the passenger door.

JACK (wolfish grin)  
Hey good looking, you need a ride?

KAREN (flips the last of her cigarette into the breeze)  
Oh I do, I certainly do!

JACK  
Well then, jump in pretty lady.

KAREN (playful)  
Thanks Mister!

**INT.** Quickly, smoothly, merges back away & into light traffic.

JACK (lowering the volume on the stereo)  
May I say the goddess Aphrodite has certainly blessed & honored you this morning.

KAREN (smiles, adjusting her scarf)  
You may & thank you for the nice compliment.

Repositions the big bag between her knees, buckles up & settles in. Curious, picks up the large drink cradled in the consul.

Hey Mister, is this big drink for me?

Taking a circumspect sip without waiting for a response.

JACK  
Ah, well I kind of. ..

KAREN (cutting him off)  
Thanks!

After a long drink, she catches her breath, the whiskey burning smooth; rattles the ice, drink empty.

Wow! And may I say that hit the spot as I was feeling exceedingly, parched!

Looking over the car, feeling the interior, cat purrs as the music plays low in rhythm to the gentle hum of the engine, the air conditioning cool, set on low breeze.

Might I also say, this is a very nice car!

JACK

The early bird usually gets its fair share of the best worms.

KAREN (confused with that comment)

So Jack, obviously I saw your note this morning. 'Seduce me at sunrise & pack a bag for a long weekend.' What you got in mind darling, besides a ride in this nice car?

Scratching blindly over on his right thigh with her left hand, playful as they actually know each other.

JACK

Well Karen, did I ever tell you that I always like to start every day by going to the window for a glimpse of the morning sky.

KAREN

Nope. Don't think so?

JACK (smiling all mysterious)

But now, I won't have to.

KAREN (playful)

And why's that?

JACK

Cause now, I can simply see the sky in the blue of your eyes when I wake up in the morning.

KAREN

Awe, that's so sweet. I've never thought of you as being whimsical or even poetic. Seems like every day, I discover something new & surprisingly charming about you.

JACK

I like being mysterious. Keep you guessing?

Leaning over, tugging on his head, she kisses him on his cheek & murmurs something silly in his ear, her seat belt straining against her tanned waistline. Their car slow veers into the opposing lane; an oncoming truck lays long on the horn before JACK steers, last second clear.

KAREN

Say, you know what Jack?

JACK  
What's that Karen?

KAREN (licking her lips)  
I think I might have had a little too much to  
eat and drink last night?

Loosening, adjusting her seat belt, then her own personal big  
belt-buckle, one, then two notches, comfortable.

JACK  
Giovanni's! Super yummy Italian right!  
And you were such great company!

KAREN  
Thank you, Jack!

JACK  
By the way, I couldn't locate the left overs  
when I got up early this morning.

Pouting a little, swallowing, miming Pavlov's dog.

KAREN (mimicking his pout)  
That's cause I hid them, deep in the veggie drawer.

No need to fret over it darling. You'll be happy to  
know, I was able to find just enough room to enjoy  
dinner all over again for breakfast this morning.

JACK  
All of it?

KAREN  
Hum, let me think? Yep, pretty sure.

JACK (smiling, panged disappointment)  
You're serious, aren't you? And where do you  
put it all, anyway?

KAREN  
Everything you see here, I owe it all to spaghetti. ..  
I heard Sophia Loren say that once in an interview.

Giggles, a little pat on her belly, her tanned midriff showing.

JACK  
It's working Karen, trust me, it's, whoops,  
here we are.

Their car turn signal blinking, RIGHT TURN. The bank's, two-sided  
clock blinking, CLOSED 7:47 AM.

KAREN  
The bank?

JACK  
I need to bag up a little cash before we set sail for  
the weekend. And even better yet, we're a little early!

KAREN  
Bag up a little cash?

JACK  
What we talked about last night. The Federal Reserve Bank here in Florida with more cash deposits in the last six months than all the other Reserve banks in the country combined.

KAREN  
From the sale of all the cocaine coming into South Florida.

JACK  
I was thinking this morning how it also coincides with the feds putting an end to pharmaceutical speed & the break up of the heroine trade out of Marseille.

KAREN  
But what's this about bagging a little cash?

JACK  
I thought I'd run in & bag up some of that cocaine cash. Won't take but a minute or two. You want to come in with?

KAREN notices a pie wedge, V shaped, break out along the top of the steering column.

KAREN (taking hold of the screwdriver)  
I was wondering what the screwdriver was for?

JACK  
Hum?

KAREN  
You got up early, slipped out & stole this car.

Smiling guilty, ignoring her query, reaches over & pops the glove box open while he parks, meticulously backing in, pointing the car back out towards the street, slightly angled, in front of the long, concrete walkway entrance that divides a manicure lawn.

JACK  
Check it out Karen. There's an ounce of the best looking weed & an equal amount of cocaine in there.

Leaving the car running, he half climbs into the back seat while KAREN picks curious with the screwdriver at the two sandwich baggies.

KAREN  
Bank robbery? Right now, here this morning?

JACK  
I've got an extra mask.

KAREN  
Jesus, Mary and freaking Joseph, Jack!

JACK unrolling the backseat towel, exposing a handgun, a double

barrel shot gun & two life-like facemasks, one of an old man, the other, an old woman. He slips on the Panama hat; sport coat pockets the handgun & brings over the masks, duffle & shotgun. Adjusting the hat in the rearview mirror, with a slight gangster tilt.

JACK

That's cool. If that's the way you want to play it. Just be ready to drive & provide me with some cover in case I should happen to run into any trouble.

JACK pushes in the car lighter, reaches into the glove box for the seedless cannabis, separates out a pack of Zigzag rolling papers & begins to quick roll a fat doobie.

KAREN (flustered)

Cover?

JACK (flicking off the safety lock)

Two triggers, one for each barrel. Safeties off.

KAREN

By the way JACK, did you ever pay for dinner, all the drinks, the wine & that expensive bottle of champagne last night? Or is that why you had me meet you just outside the rest rooms, then quickly rushed me out the side door & into the parking lot?

JACK

To be honest, I did find myself a little short. But I thought you had a good time? So all & all, it pretty much worked itself out in the end.

KAREN

I knew you were too good to be true! Have you told me the truth about anything? Do you even have a job selling real estate or was that just a bunch of horse. ..

JACK (cutting her short)

You misunderstood, I'm taking real estate classes. ..

Three nights a week. ..

What, I should have my license in a week or two. ..

Okay, maybe three, four weeks at the latest if I can pass the test on my first try.

KAREN

Unbelievable!

Briefly rolling wet the fat joint in his mouth, car lighter lights it; taste tokes, followed by a long, dizzying drag before passing it over to KAREN.

JACK

Hey, let's just smoke this doobie & do a couple lines & chill here for a few minutes while we wait for the bank to open.

KAREN taste tokes, before a long, dizzying drag herself while examining curious & toying with life-like, old man mask.

I'm sorry Karen. I've just been a little down on my luck is all. (slowly exhaling)

You've got to trust me. .. I've been scoping out this bank for weeks now. The Saturday morning guard has got to be close to eighty?

KAREN (exhaling & toking again)  
Put the mask on.

JACK  
Hum?

KAREN (smiling)  
Come on, put it on, I want to see what you look like?

**EXT.** The horizon closing with dark washes of cerulean blues & deep violets as the front continues moving in off the coast.

**3**

**EXT.** NOON, DARK WINTER STORM CLOUDS APPROACHING FROM THE WEST. GIO PONTI BUILDING, DENVER MUSEUM OF ART, EAST SIDE PARKING LOT.

**Graphic** – November 1959, Denver Museum of Art, Colorado.

'Art is a treasure, and these thin but jealous walls will defend it.'

– Gio Ponti

Among other cars, a 1959, black Chevy Impala Coupe, drivers window two fingers down, engine running, exhaust fumes, chilled visible.

**INT.** Drivers seat, NADINE, 35ish, alluring, full brows & lashes, dark brown doe eyes, natural full figure curves, leggy lanky, wheat blonde thick hair loosely barrette up into a checkered pattern newsboy cap, stewardess wool navy topcoat, low cut heels. The heater set on low as the radio plays, Sarah Vaughan's, 'Black Coffee'.

**NOTE:** Suggest model/ actress Kate Upton for the roll of Nadine.

She twirls a fat doobie in her mouth before lighting it with a gold Tiffany lighter, the letters M & M prominently scripted on one side, a taste toke followed by a long, dizzying drag. Stoned eyes survey the lot as she slowly exhales, the smoke drifting lazily around the interior of the car. A check of her wristwatch, quarter past noon. Sighs frustration.

Smiling a memory, another long toke before snuffing out & pocketing the remaining doobie inside an art deco cigarette case. Slips the case & lighter deep into her right coat pocket & brings out a small caliber handgun & transfers it comfortably, deep into her left coat pocket. Drifting away, rolls up the window & rests her eyes closed.

**4**

**EXT.** NIGHT, PORT HARBOR, THREE PIGEONS FIDGET ON THE BOW OF A FRENCH CARGO SHIP. NIGHT CLUB MUSIC ECHOES FROM THE SHORELINE.



**Graphic-** October 1959, Port City of Marseille, France

The busiest port on the Mediterranean where neighborhood labs in the old French quarter run by the Corsican mafia, convert opium from the Middle East, China & the Golden Triangle into high-grade heroin for shipment across the Atlantic to Montreal, Mexico City, Buenos Aires & New York.

'The French Connection'

A neon sign, LE PERROQUET BLEU, identifies the source of the music, a coastal nightclub across the way from the cargo ship. One pigeon takes flight, lands on one of the club's outdoor patio tables & begins to forage on an abandoned seafood platter complimented with three empty wine glasses. The other two pigeons wing over & join in on the fun. We quickly leave the mingling pigeons, a few cavorting couples & slip inside the entrance, the sliding glass door, slightly ajar.

**MOVIE CREDITS ROLL**

**INT.** The club is framed with several large columns & expansive arched windows. Large, Orientalist Movement, themed paintings & throw carpets line the wall & cover the floor, still popular in France ever since Napoleon discovers the near & far East. Drop down paddle ceiling fans, individual table lamps, large palms, colorful winged chairs & mix match couches. A venue similar in style to, 'The Jane Ballroom', New York City.

An eclectic crowd, wealthy Europeans & Easterners, buyers & traffickers, tribal garb & tailored European suits & an equal number of fashionably dressed, make up heavy, exotic women. Drinking & dancing, lots of smoke from cigars, rolled smokes & hookah pipes of opium & hashish. An exotic woman sings a lively ballad in French, accompanied by a cast of big band, musicians.

Three tall, inebriated stewardesses, uniform anatomy-fitting TWA blouses & skirts, one being our NADINE from the museum parking lot, swing to the music & monopolize the dance floor.

**MOVIE CREDITS END**

The lively ballad ends, replaced with a soulful, bluesy torch song. The three stewardesses begin working there way back to their table. NADINE scanning the room while navigating, as if looking for someone, before a tribal garbed Easterner pulls her down into his lap, laughter familiarity, a grope, a kiss before she is back up on her feet again, re-scanning the room.

POV meanders & finds the club owner, tall, vintage movie star attractive, blue poplin suit, shaking hands with a shady looking Eastern, white suit, dark sunglasses. Conversation concludes, the owner side pockets a fat envelope, turns & heads to a back room office.

He key opens the office door & closes, locking it behind him, muting the club music. Inside we find ANTOINE, an overweight, barrel chested, cigarette smoking subordinate; packing two different colored drug parcels into one of three, large, blue, TWA Air Line logoed, suitcases.

CLUB OWNER (in French)  
It's all set Antoine. We start shipping it  
all overseas on cargo ships, hidden away in  
automobiles, beginning next week.

A sharp knock on the office door startles the two.

5

**INT.** BACK INSIDE THE 1959 CHEVY IMPALA, MUSEUM PARKING LOT,  
NADINE SNOOZING. RADIO NOW PLAYING, SARAH VAUGHAN'S 'SWING LOW'.

A jeweled, finger ring taps on the passenger's side windshield.  
Smoke & window moisture blur the intruders face, scary distorted.

NADINE awakens, sluggish, her left hand slipping deep into her  
left coat, gun pocket before recognition. Smirks, nods  
acknowledgement, three fingers waves while checking her watch.  
Gives the car a little gas, charging up the battery as she checks  
her face in the rear view mirror.

**EXT.** Exits the car, shoulders her purse, locking the door behind  
her & awkwardly, navigates, all legs & heels, bumping along to  
the rear of the car. The weather, progressively stormy & moody.

NADINE (cold, adjusting her cap)  
You're late & all by yourself. ..  
And where's my good friend, the old man?

The intruder a young CHINESE male, oversized suit & topcoat,  
fedora, with a black duffle bag in one hand.

CHINAMAN  
He not feeling well, maybe he getting old. Sends  
number one son alone this time & I take long way  
over, avoid nose rivals & neighbors.

NADINE (suspicious, key opens the trunk)  
Let's make this quick, you're making me nervous & I  
want to tour the museum before this winter storm hits.

CHINAMAN (handing over his bag)  
A ah, most appreciative!

NADINE (surveying her surroundings)  
So where are you parked?

CHINAMAN  
Yonder, over on the west side. Instructions from  
Marseille. But I look for & find you, very okay.

Checking her sense of direction, NADINE blindly drops the duffle  
in the trunk & simultaneously picks up in her peripheral, a  
vintage Coupe de Ville, Cadillac, motoring down the parking lot  
their way & coolly slips her left hand deep into her coat pocket.

**INT.** A RESTORATION NEW, 1949, COUPE DE VILLE, CADILLAC, V8,  
PAYNE'S GREY OVER DARK BLUE. RADIO PLAYS SAME SOULFUL BLUES.

Driving, slowing, NED MOON SR., 40ish, mechanic hands, unshaven,

thick bushy hair & brows, smoking a cigarette, his window rolled down; intrigued by the odd twosome ahead. Riding shotgun, NED JR., 9ish, a younger version of his father, equally curious.

NED SR. nods as they pass the equally curious couple behind the Impala & note its distinctive cat eye taillights, bat wing fenders, Hertz bumper sticker & unique license plate, HER14S8L.

**EXT.** Back inside the trunk, the conspirators quickly exchange banded cash for two different colored drug packages. Satisfied, NADINE rises up as the CHINAMAN removes his duffle. Staring out at the Cadillac parking up ahead, blindly, accidentally closes the trunk lid on her coattail.

NADINE

What the hell?

Amused, key opens, frees her coattail & closes it shut again.

Okay then, we all good?

CHINAMAN (bows, holding back a smile)

All good. Until we meet again, Ms. Na Dine.

NADINE

Might I suggest you have the old man with you next time, number one son. ..

The Chinaman already on the move, nodding & slipping away.

Assuming there is a next time? (to herself)

NADINE heads off towards the museum, checking the passenger door as locked as she passes. Taking in the view, she fishes in her coat pocket for her cigarette case & lighter.

The Museum's height & castle like architecture, picturesque, framed by the Colorado Rockies on the western horizon. The roofline, aligned with rectangular cutouts & two expansive, half-moon shaped, mirrored swooping curves.

Pausing, she lighter lights the last half of her smoke. As she inhales a long, dizzying toke, a passenger propeller plane suddenly appears from behind her, low on the horizon from the east, a departure from the Denver airport.

Gawkily, she ducks with the surprise roar of propeller engines overhead. Then watches as the plane continues to elevate towards the Rockies, giggling at her stoned self before exhaling an imperiously high smoke ring that gets caught up in the wind.

**NOTE-** Digitally limit the neighboring cityscape, a Roadway Inn Motel, appears prominent across the street from the museum.

As the stormy skies escalate from the west, NADINE, re-stoned & re-energized after her nap, bristles bur cold, collar's up & quickly shuffles up to the entrance. A glance first at the large paper banner above the entrance, 'Orientalism Exhibition, The works of French artist, Jean-Leon Gerome, November 4 - 28',

before going inside as a flash of winter lightning illuminates the entrance, then crackle boom!

6

**INT.** MUSEUM, THE MUSIC IS WONDERING SUSPENSE, MUTED LIBRARY SOFT.

We wonder about & quickly lose NADINE. Searching, we view flash sequences of paintings & sculpture, including many works by Frederic Remington & guest artist Jean-Leon Gerome. We slip into an elevator & exit out at the top floor exhibition room.

Sparse with visitors, the room partially lighted with ceiling window skylights, we find NADINE standing next to the father & son team from the Cadillac. Holding her hat, topcoat tucked on one hip, split knee-length skirt, a shear pink cotton blouse revealing a lacey slip; conservative sexy & willowy Rubenesque.

Father & son, NED MOON SR. & NED JR., both wiry fit & lanky, coats folded over their arms, oversized dark pressed cuffed pants & long sleeve dress shirts, worn leather lace up shoes.

They're standing in front of Frederic Remington's, 'Stampede by Lightning', the painting from the opening scene.

The sofa size Remington is centered by two, taller than wider, paintings by Jean-Leon Gerome, 'Pool in a Harem' & 'After the Bath'. They each feature voluptuous, female bathers, their charms turned away from the viewer, at leisure in a Haman Turkish bathhouse against a background of detailed Ottoman lapis lazuli blue & white tiles, hookah pipes & exotic masseurs.

The bathers, have European features & skin tones as the artist created the paintings from travel sketches to the East, but finished them at his salon in Paris, using local Parisian women as models.

**NOTE-** The Gio Ponti museum, although vintage looking, was actually not completed until 1972 & already, a very modern, new age, space ship looking, stand alone addition was recently completed in 2018, to be digitally removed.

NADINE, flighty, happily stoned, talkative & friendly.

NADINE

I always like to begin my tour at the end or the top floor of a museum. Then work my way backwards, towards the entrance. Especially when I know I'm short on time.

JUNIOR (9 years old)

Then you're starting with my personal favorite, Frederic Remington's, Stampede by Lightning.

NED SR.

I see why you brought me all the way out here to see this painting in particular, Junior. It's very well done.

NADINE (dreamingly)

I love the way they framed the Remington between the Jean-Leon Geromes, thinking the three of them would be a really nice addition to my living room.

JUNIOR (confidence)

I like the way all the warm tones, the foreground & horse here & then the female bathers off to each side compliment the cool blues & greens of the Remington rainstorm & the lapis blue tiles of the Geromes.

NADINE (nudging up against Junior)

Opposite ends of the color wheel all working together as a collection. What an excellent observation.

JUNIOR

To be honest, I'm quoting my teacher, Miss Pollart. We visited the museum last week as part of a class field trip & discussed the importance of using complimentary colors to make your paintings sing.

NADINE

And sing they do, Miss Pol Lar. .. You know if we look long enough, the complimentary colors should begin to vibrate & Remington's horse might actually gallop a little for us. (clucks her tongue)

Complimentary colors placed next to each other naturally vibrate. NADINE giggling as the horse & rider begin to vibrate before the moment is broken by flash of lightning from the ceiling windows, lighting up the paintings, followed by a delayed, crackle boom.

Oh my! Well then. I think that's the Lord's way of telling me that I'm running out of time. It was nice visiting with you fellas & best of luck with your art career. (tussling the boy's hair) I've got to keep moving if I'm going to tour the rest of the museum before it really starts to get bad out there.

JUNIOR (restyling his hair)

It was nice visiting with you as well!

NED SR.

Indeed Miss & if we ever get a chance to fly TWA, we'll be sure to keep an eye out for you.

NADINE (winks)

Likewise, gentlemen!

NED SR.

And careful on the roads out there. They can be a little tricky when the weather turns.

NADINE (turning, looking back)

Oh, I'm staying just across the street at the Roadway Inn, so I should be okay.

NED SR. & JUNIOR watch her all the way to the elevators before turning & refocusing back on the Remington.

NED SR.

So tell me again Junior, what have we got here?

JUNIOR

I want to go from my simple watercolors to become a great artist, like Remington someday.

NED SR.

Certainly a noble profession & I must say you seem to have inherited a lot of your mother's creativity. But I thought you wanted to be an airplane pilot, or was it a musician, the week before last?

JUNIOR

Artist, musician, pilot or restoring cars with you Dad, I want to do it all! A renaissance, a renaissance

NED SR.

A renaissance man?

JUNIOR

Right, like the early European artists & scholars. Guys like Da Vinci, Plato, Aristotle. ..

NED SR.

You'll have to introduce me someday to this art teacher of yours . . . Okay, let me think. Let me think. I would start off like a forger. Copy not only the techniques & style of the great ones, but their paintings as well. Even make & mix your own paints, like they did back in the day. Stretch our own canvases. We'll get you some nice brushes & a sturdy easel for starters.

POV pans back & forth from the Remington to the bathhouse nudes.

Say, Junior, what about these naked gals, the ones keeping an eye on the horses? Maybe you could paint something like that some day as well. Of course, we would want to sign up a couple models, then get a . . .

JUNIOR

Maybe someday, after a lot of practice, I could paint the naked ladies. But for now, I just want to start with the Westerns, the horses & cowboys. They remind me of summers on Grandpa's farm when we would all go out riding & shooting as a family. With Mom, remember?

NED SR. (big remembrance smile)

Sure, I got you. Those were some fun times. Hey, you know what Junior? The gal on the right, the redhead, reminds me a little bit of your late mother. I wonder if she's also missing her front two teeth.

JUNIOR (smiling)

Seriously Papa, how does one become a great painter?

NED SR.

Okay, okay. Thinking we need to get a crystal clear photograph of this painting. .. Or better yet, it would be nice to have the original to work from, maybe bring the naked ladies along as well. And then that way, you can copy & study every detail. Analyze every brush stroke, every color or mixture of colors. Match it up just right, from the original itself?

NED SR. rubbing his unshaven chin as his eyes begin to drift, scanning the walls, the ceiling, a corner stair well leading up to a corner skybox window, the ceiling windows wet & icing over.

I got an idea? Come on.

7

**EXT.** NIGHT, ROOFTOP, THE DENVER MUSEUM OF ART, WINTER COLD.

Aerial drone cameras, falling temperatures, a full moon picturesque against the distant Colorado Rockies, cradled in one of the rooflines, swooping curves. A 1950's theatrical song, building with suspense, plays over the scene.



**Cut to:** Ground level, along the outside perimeter of the museum with a lively hound dog & two fractious, middle aged, security guards. Matching heavy dark coats, snow boots, fur trapper hats with security badges pinned to the fronts; drinking from pints of whisky, their breath visible in the moonlight.

MIKE admiring a new rifle, unsteadily, focusing through the scope at a view of the moon ducking in & out of passing clouds.

V.O. MIKE (POV of the moon)

Wow, the moon is as clear as a shiny new penny!

Returning the rifle to Frank.

FRANK (slipping the sling over one shoulder)

It ought to be, cause this beauty certainly cost me a pretty penny.

MIKE

You surprised me was all I was trying to say, bringing your rifle to work with you tonight.

FRANK

First hard freeze of the year, Mike! Thought we'd break up the monotony of safeguarding the museum & have us a little fun tonight. See if we can't bag us a few jackrabbits for the big game & bar b q this weekend.

MIKE

I'm all in on some fun!

Frank, a finishing swig, wings away the empty against the side of the museum before bringing out a fresh pint from his coat pocket.

Let's work our way around to the north side where we're more likely to find them hiding in the shadows. Then if nothing else, we can work the brush line, out along the parking lot.

MIKE

Sounds like a plan! (a finishing swig on his bottle)

**Cut to:** POV on the museum rooftop.

V.O. MIKE

You know Frank, I've only tried rabbit once & I thought it tasted a little like chicken?

V.O. FRANK

That's funny Mike, cause the last time I tried chicken, I thought it tasted a little like rabbit?

V.O. (drunken laughter)

A figure appears outlined against the moon, layered head to toe, cat burglar black with three rolled up canvases, crisscrossed tied, spiking out the top of his backpack. He's feeding a length of coiled rope over to the edge of the roofline circle wrapped around one shoulder. A shaft of light, from an open skybox window points to the heavens like an ominous epiphany.

**Cut to:** JUNIOR, standing ground level along one corner of the museum, also layered black, half moonlight visible & half hidden in the shadows, boot paws on the iced walk as a length of rope tumbles down from the sky, a dozen feet short of ground level.

Looking up, we see SENIOR coming over the edge, the climbing rope wrapped around his posterior & hooked in front by a karabiner; struggling to get a foothold against the edge of the baseboard, before beginning his rappel, the rope already ice cycle wet.

JUNIOR (shouts, hands cupped)

Careful Papa!

A hound yelps in response, distant, intruding on the suspenseful music, when a rifle shot rings out.

SENIOR jerks violently, gun shot, his boots momentarily pressed against the baseboard before free falling, whistling through the



icy air, lifeless, his karabiner offering little resistance, spiraling down & banging up against the side of the museum.

He comes wildly spinning off the end of the rope into a flaying JUNIOR with a headfirst crack on the iced walk. A big Colt 45 pistol skitters out of his coat jacket with the fall.

The yelping hound breaks the silence again as another gunshot goes off, followed by drunken laughter.

V.O. GUARD MIKE

Hold on up there fellers & put your hands up!

Tears freezing down the side of his face, JUNIOR leans in, reaches inside his father's coat jacket, grasps his wallet & car keys & kisses his forehead goodbye before slipping off his backpack of paintings.

A third rifle shot rings out, grazes, tears at the shoulder of JUNIOR's overcoat, followed by more distant laughter.

JUNIOR scrambles to his feet & picks up the pistol; steps back with the backpack & disappears into the shadows. POV stays on the vacated shadow as the voices & yelps come closer.

A gunshot followed by a muzzle flash from the shadows. JUNIOR's lanky image briefly appears with the flash, gun range shooting stance, two hands on the pistol grip, followed by five more singular, rhythmical shots & muzzle blast flashes.

The distant chatter & drunken laughter go silent, the dog howls pain & goes silent as well. Scene fades upward to the sky, dark clouds racing across the face of the moon.

**CUT to:** The sound of heaving breathing & the crunch of footsteps in the darkness, it's JUNIOR, scrambling & sliding in the parking lot up to their Cadillac. He opens the door, tosses the gun & backpack onto the passenger seat, jumps in & closes the door behind him, ending the suspenseful music.

**INT.** Starts the car, shifts into gear & drives out to the exit with just the eerie sound of tires crunching over snow & ice. Stops at the intersection, blue & red lights flash up the highway to the east, a police car in the distance, coming fast.

The neon sign on the Roadway Motel comes into view across the intersection. JUNIOR puts the car in gear & quickly crosses the highway, enters & begins to slow cruise the motel parking lot, looking left & right at the various parked cars & license plates.

He spots the distinctive plate, HER14S8L & the HERTZ rental sticker on Nadine's Chevy. Through the curtains, there's a lamplight on in the room beyond the Chevy. JUNIOR parks next to the Chevy & begins to slip the backpack over one shoulder before catching a flash of light from a cigarette lighter in his rear view mirror. In the mirror, distinguishes two Asian men, smoking, fedora hats pulled low, windows two fingers down, parked nose out in the row of cars directly behind him, their car engine running.

JUNIOR opens the glove box & reaches for a 50 box of .45 caliber, Winchester cartridges.

8

**EXT.** COLORADO, ROCKY MOUNTAINS, A PHOTOSHOOT IN A VALLEY CLEARING OF ASPENS. BLUE SKIES, EARLY AFTERNOON, GENTLE BREEZE.

**Graphic**— A valley in Colorado, ten years later, November 1969

Modeling, ALAINA TURNER, an alias, 23ish, undercover agent with the government's new Stolen Art & Antiquities Crime unit. Cold case, follow up, Denver Museum art heist. Lanky, natural full figure curves, inviting dark doe eyes, full brows & lashes, pin up girl makeup, tousled, thick brown hair barrette up, loosely.

Dressed conservative sexy, country western line stitch patterns on a long sleeve pink silk shirt, a black knee length side buttoned skirt & leather cowgirl boots, the top half of the boots artistically painted sky blue. She's standing against the front of Ned's restored, scene five, 1949 Cadillac, windows down, brandishing a double barrel shot gun.

NED now 19ish, baby face handsome, near shoulder length, thick brown hair parted over to one side, bushy brows, dark eyes, lanky, labor car mechanic fit, a tattoo displaying open scissors runs along the outside of his right bicep & forearm. Loose fitting khakis, un-tucked short sleeve blue dress shirt over a white tank tee shirt, worn, leather lace up boots; standing behind a tri-pod mounted camera pointing west to the Rockies, final focusing & framing adjustments.

**Note:** Picturing a young Jeff Bridges for the role of Ned Moon.

There's a 'surreal' mountain lion, oblivious, wandering around the shoot as a dreamy instrumental on the radio mysteriously lowers. NED steps around his camera, taking a long toke on a fat doobie, passes it over to ALAINA & returns to his set up.

ALAINA (toking, her undercover story line)  
I'm just not sure anymore, Ned? At the time of the accident, I was attending Nursing School at C.U. But now, I just want to get as far away as possible. Somewhere coastal, like South Florida, maybe the Keys, where I can find a little anonymity.

NED  
I get it. Make a clean get away. ..

If you're wondering, it's a hybrid of an Afghan Kush & a local strain of Mary Jane. I get the Kush from an old Chinese friend that I've known since I was nine.

ALAINA (another toke, smiling)  
I like it. It's like suddenly, there's this level of comfort & conceptual ease & ah, creativity.

NED  
All right, great, so ok. Let's see if we can't

get two, maybe three really nice photos, that I can enlarge & trace directly on to a canvas.

ALAINA gestures the rolled smoke back.

I'm good, you hold on to it.

ALAINA

You were saying you had a number of large, photo realistic oil paintings, in the works?

NED

Eight or nine that I really like, in various stages of completion. I plan on investing in a series of prints, if I can ever get dozen or so finished?

ALAINA

You know a painting is never truly finished, it's just abandoned. Da Vinci.

NED

Well Leonardo, I've been painting for a number of years now but in the past, I always had to sell my originals, just to pay some bills until I got a job over at Harrison Ford. .. Or should I say, until Uncle Sam sent me a letter.

ALAINA

Yeah, you mentioned that on the phone. The draft, when do you report?

NED (searching his memory)

Nineteenth December. Helicopter mechanic school. Army Infantry. Miami, Florida.

ALAINA

That's just around the corner. We'll have to get together, if I decide to move down to the Keys.

NED

Sure!

ALAINA

Hell, helicopters, sunshine, the beach. Maybe get in some deep sea fishing on the weekends.

NED

And I'll be working on jeeps & trucks. I wanted to sign up with the Air Force & become a pilot. But, with only a high school diploma, I didn't qualify for Officer's Candidate school & they said I was too tall anyway.

ALAINA

Probably safer on the ground, perhaps a blessing in disguise.

NED

Maybe? But some day, I like to have my own plane. Fly around the world, just painting & getting stoned.

ALAINA (looking off in the distance)  
Begin along coastal Florida & then it's off  
to the Caribbean & get your Paul Gauguin thing on  
with the some of the island girls. Eventually, slip  
across the Atlantic, over to the Mediterranean. Do  
the whole Cote d'Azur. All the while, taking photos  
& creating new art & living off the sale of your  
prints & the occasional original?

NED  
Sounds even better, hearing it from you.

ALAINA  
I love the whole idea of living out on the edge.  
Like some sort of nomad or gypsy, precariously  
surviving on one's intellect & ah, creativity.  
And I certainly love this setup!

NED  
Thank you.

ALAINA (the two stoned, punchy, silly banter)  
So what can I, Alaina Turner, ad to the drama?

NED  
Thinking a little mystery & seduction? Like you've  
got a secret, as every painting should tell a story.

ALAINA  
Like a good novel.

NED (POV through the camera lens)  
Just like a novel. Hum, adjust your blouse just a  
little so that you look a little more disheveled.  
Like it's been a long day & the viewer is wanting  
to see more of you. Uncover the back-story, the  
mystery behind the blouse?

ALAINA (flirting, adjusting)  
The mystery behind the blouse.

NED  
Nice!  
How about I start with a story line & you strike a  
pose, to match whatever you're thinking or feeling.

ALAINA  
Shoot. (winks, adjusting the shotgun)

NED  
Let's see ah, her eyes, dark, heavily shadowed,  
blinking at me, slowly, seductively. Almost like the  
black of cornflowers in a black orchid bouquet you  
could say if one were so inclined. (click, click)  
And I wasn't. It wouldn't do, to get too carried away.

ALAINA (dreamy)  
Cause maybe she's a little dangerous?

NED (smiling serious)  
Dangerous, yes. Hold that look. (click) Nice!  
But she definitely was worth a bit of charcoal &  
paper, that's for sure. Her shotgun, a security  
blanket, the female outlaw on the run. (click)

ALAINA (chimes in)  
And after the big heist, my gang went right & I  
decided to go left, on a whim, with all the money,  
the jewels. .. & maybe a couple stolen paintings?

NED  
A wrong turn? Stolen art? Trouble in paradise? I  
like it! (click, click) Try to make the viewer wonder  
if you're pouting or holding back a little smile or  
a secret, like the half smile on the Mona Lisa.  
And you've got a big secret! (click, click)

ALAINA  
So then I simply disappear & start anew with all the  
loot. Cause my man, the leader, has eyes for another  
women in the gang, who strangely enough, use to be  
my secret lover? (holding back laughter)

NED (smiling)  
Oh, a double twist at the end, heartbreak city.  
So where do you go from here? What to do with the  
jewels, the stolen paintings? Last one. (click)  
One more. How about a little, please, someone  
come to my rescue! (click) Nice!  
Okay Alaina, I think that's it?

ALAINA (drifting off)  
I was thinking maybe in the novel, we could  
say her eyes were as dark as the inside  
of a postman's boot, on a moonless night?

ALIANA giggling, stoned, amused with herself.

NED (placating silly, breaking down the camera)  
Who's eyes?

ALAINA  
You know, the ones that were worth a bit of  
charcoal & paper. (giggling)

NED  
Oh, you mean the one that had eyes for another  
woman.

ALAINA (being silly, stoned)  
Right. What happened to her, the Mona Lisa?

NED  
That's the mystery. That's why we keep coming  
back to look at the painting for answers!

ALAINA walking up to NED, swaying side to side, John Wayne like,  
the shotgun, a counterbalance.

ALAINA

I'm thinking, we should really write that novel  
& use your painting as the book jacket, cover.

Several wolves begin howling, evocatively, back & fourth  
throughout the valley.

NED

Maybe we should sssssshhh?  
Do you hear that?

The surreal mountain lion comes to life, excited. More howling,  
a couple of gunshots go off, followed by two more gunshots.

Sounds like a pack of wolves arguing with some  
hunters over a dinner?

ALAINA

Speaking of dinner, I'm getting a little hungry  
myself with all this posing & running around from  
Johnny law.

NED

Me to.

ALAINA

How about coming over to my place. I'll show you  
some of my watercolors & we can pick up a bottle of  
wine & I'll whip up some spaghetti.

NED

Sure, okay!

NED hoisting the tripod over his shoulder as another gunshot,  
louder, closer, goes off.

We probably should load the shotgun before we take  
off. I got a box of shells in the glove box.

The surreal big cat, walking up & down the length of the Cadillac  
with anticipation, 'don't forget me', as the wind suddenly picks  
up. Leaves, pin wheeling across the clearing, the sky darkening &  
moody. We fade out on buzzards, circling in the distance, as one  
big buzzard flashes right up to the front of the camera.

9

**EXT.** BREEZY, EARLY MORNING, COASTAL FLORIDA HWY A1A. THE  
ATLANTIC'S HORIZON, AWASH WITH CLOSING OMINOUS, STORM CLOUDS.

Motoring north along coastal Hwy A1A, driver's window down, a  
weathered 1969, manual transmission, 300 straight-6, Ford pickup.

**INT.** Finishing an apple Danish, driving, LAURA HEMINGWAY, 23ish,  
lanky, tanned, thick brows & lashes, wheat blonde, long thick  
hair, a section barrette to one side, natural full figure curves,  
swimmer's fit, worn bellbottom jeans & rock band tee shirt, big  
movie star sunglasses, sockless Converse canvas shoes. Sonny &  
Cher's, 'The Beat Goes On' plays on the radio.

Approaching a bank, its two-sided clock blinking, OPEN 8:07 AM,  
signals, turning in, suddenly tap breaks nearly hitting two

teenage boys on ten-speed bicycles, racing, riding south in front of the entrance. (same two boys from scene two)

**EXT.** Other than a few employee cars parked off to the side, there is only one other car in the lot. A black Lincoln Continental, front windows down, backed in, pointing out towards the street in front of a manicured lawn dividing a long walk up to a pink stucco, single story bank building. It's shadowed behind tropical vegetation with big picture windows, the blinds pulled down.

LAURA parks opposite angle to the Cadillac, facing the bank, three spaces over on the north side of the sidewalk.

**INT.** She turns off the engine & allows the radio to play softly. Stares over curious at the stranger in the Lincoln who is smoking a rolled smoke & her car engine is running.

The stranger returns LAURA's stare & quickly, its a staring contest through movie star sunglasses.

Eventually, after exhaling a perfect smoke ring out her window, the stranger surrenders, blindly ashtrays her smoke & looks back out towards the street traffic as her electric windows roll up.

LAURA smiles, victory! Turns & reaches into her purse & pulls out a checkbook & pen. Reaching over to the passenger seat, where a foam green, Fender guitar sits propped against the door, grasps a thick green notebook & tabletop's it in her lap. She quickly calculates her account balance, disappointed, scripts a check for CASH, thirty-seven dollars, twenty-eight cents.

Finished, manually rolls up her window, pulls the key from the ignition, a tug on the door handle when an alarm goes off, loud!

**EXT.** The trunk pops open on the stranger's car as well as her driver's door. Still sunglasses, the stranger comes out holding a double barrel shotgun, a lefty, leans up against the side of the Lincoln, bracing herself, points the shotgun along the length of the hood directly towards the bank's entrance.

Then an odd looking old man in a navy sport coat wearing a Panama hat comes hobbling out the bank bleeding a thigh high spiral of blood on one pant leg, waving a pistol in one hand & carries a large duffle in the other, calls out to the woman.

JACK

Get in the car! You drive, let's go baby, let's go!

KAREN shotgun sights in on an elderly guard with a pistol at the entrance, his shirt blood red wet along one hip, coming slowly into view, then out of view directly behind the laboring JACK. The guard carefully, drops to a shooting stance on one knee. Karen gestures with the shotgun, swaying the barrel side to side!

KAREN

Move to your left or right, Jack & duck!

JACK

Let's go Karen, just get in the car!

KAREN

You really need to move Jack! (more to herself)

JACK ignores her gestures, waving her off, continues the same protracted line down the walkway. Frustrated, KAREN hurriedly fires off both barrels; the first shot goes just off to the side of JACK'S head & into the vegetation, shattering the big picture window on one side of the entrance. The second shot, just over the other side of JACK'S head, he half ducking, sprays the other side of the entrance & picture window with some of the metallic shot hitting home on the guard, knocking him down to his hands & both knees.

Having emptied both barrels, KAREN quickly slips back into the driver's seat, closes the door behind her, leans across & opens the passenger front door.

She sees JACK reach the back of the car in her side view mirror just as a pistol shot goes off from the guard, who has gathered himself up again, hitting & shattering the back of JACK'S left elbow, the arm holding the duffle. JACK screams pain & drops the duffle just short of the trunk & down onto the parking lot.

A second shot hits JACK high on his back shoulder, pitching him forward against the back of the car, his body weight closing the trunk lid, prematurely.

JACK side steps to the edge of the passenger side, rear bumper, turns & fires two shots of his own, using his good right arm.

One shot hits home on the guard, but JACK is simultaneously hit with a lethal third round, chest high. He spins back around, pressing up along the rear, side window, spray-painting it red with blood before collapsing down onto the pavement, dead.

The elderly guard, also fatally hit, spills forward, face down and onto the walkway.

There is a brief silence after all the madness before the wind suddenly picks up & stirs all the gun smoke away, the sky darkens & it starts to rain, hard!

KAREN fixated, staring over at the open passenger door now soaked with showering rain before finally sliding over & closing the door. Slides back, taps on the wipers, shifts into drive & calmly motors out to the street & turns north.

LAURA peers through the rain at the abandoned duffle while simultaneously starting the pickup. Turns on the wipers, 360's the perimeter & looks back over at the bank entrance; abandoned but for the dead security guard, the blinds stilled pulled down on the shattered windows as her car radio plays again.

She wets her lips, swallows, the rain now blinding, opens her door & tiptoes her way over to the duffle, grabs it & quickly shuffles back to her truck. Soaking wet, removes her sunglasses, unzips the bag on her lap, biting her lower lip.



LAURA  
Finder's keepers, loser weepers.

Grinning, zips it back up, tosses it down on the passenger floor & shifts her truck into reverse. One final look over at the bank entrance. Still deserted! Clucks her tongue, turns up the radio, backs up, wheels the pickup around & exits the lot, south.

10

**INT.** BROWARD COUNTY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. HANGAR, OFFICE SPACE.

**Graphic—** October 1972, Broward County International Airport, Lauderdale, FL.

The morning sunlight spilling in from a tall office window across a map of Eastern Florida, the Caribbean & Central America & various aviation works of art, including a painted drawing of our storyline, modified, Cessna 'Falcon' 402 airplane.

NED MOON JR., post Viet Nam, now 22ish, coastal tanned, lanky fit, unshaven, bushy thick hair to the top of his shoulders with a few sun highlights parted to one side. Loose fitting, worn thin army green coveralls, cuffed at the ankles with a 7<sup>TH</sup> Squadron 17<sup>TH</sup> Cavalry HHT, Nam flag patch on one shoulder over a white tank tee shirt, worn leather lace up shoes; drinking coffee at his desk, looking at an aviation tech book.

JERRY, older, loose fitting flight coveralls, a long brim cap, courtesy knocks, no wait ducks in.

JERRY

Hey Chief!

NED

Jerry!

JERRY

I see where you got the cassette player & radio wired into the headsets & cabin speakers.

NED

You listen to it.

JERRY

I love it, especially with the cabin being so solidly finished & insulated.

NED (nodding, smiling, standing)

Cool! Hey, this reminds me of when my Dad & I finished the rebuild on the 49' Cadillac & took her out for the first time.

Slipping on a faded Nam, long brim cap, patting his pockets full.

JERRY (holding open the door)

What, it's been nearly a year since you started in on the busted up Cessna?

NED

A lot of work & modifications that's for. ..oops?

Stops, turns & grabs a large circle of rope with a grappling hook tied to one end from a cart top.

Almost forgot my first paying charter.

JERRY

What you got there?

NED

A grappling hook. Thought we'd sweep by & pick up an advertising banner before our test flight down the coast this morning.

JERRY

Sounds like fun!

**Cut to EXT.** Out on the tarmac, a customized, Cessna 'Falcon' 402, hooked to a tow bar. Sections of bare metal highlight the modifications. The customary twin piston engines on the wings are replaced with a single engine Walter M601D turboprop in the nose. The nose, lengthened to correct the center of gravity, increasing the payload, top speed & use on shorter runways. Extra fuel tanks added to the wings, giving the aircraft a much better flight range of over 800 nautical miles.

**Note:** See one of the actual series of modified airplanes at the end of the script for photos & manufacturer details for the film.

NED clips one end of the towrope to the tail & feathers forward a length of coiled rope, up through a trap door below the pilots seat as JERRY unhooks & pulls the tow bar away. The two gather before take off & survey the modifications.

JERRY

I love how you lengthened & reconstructed the nose, replaced the twin props on the wings with the single engine Walter & then topped it off with those additional fuel tanks on the wings.

NED

So streamline & freaking mean looking!

JERRY

Can't wait to see you put that paint scheme on her this weekend!

NED

All those nights & weekends, when I would sneak off to those flight simulators back in Miami, daydreaming about a day like today. And I could've never gotten her done without the help of you & your brother!

JERRY

Hell, Mike & I just helped out on a few weekends here & there with some technical odds & ends. It was all your vision & schematics that brought her to life.

NED

You two had all the answers my friend! And to think

just 28 more payments on my loan & she'll be all mine!

JERRY knocks the brim of NED's hat down; he's co-piloting the test flight today.

JERRY

Come on! Let's get this big bird in the air.

**Cut to INT.** Headsets on, clicking instruments, ping ponging various system readings back & fourth. A first false start, a second & on the third attempt. ..

**EXT.** The engine coughs, catches & comes to life. A flock of gulls explode from behind the hangar.

**Cut to:** The plane taxis up to the head of the runway.

V.O. TOWER (call signs, last 3 numbers & tail letters)  
Cessna Falcon 4 9 6 November, Zebra, you are clear  
for take off.

V.O. NED (instructions are always repeated back to ATC)  
Copy that tower, Cessna Falcon 4 9 6 November  
Zebra, clear for take off.

**INT.** Inside the cabin, it's remarkably quiet. JERRY selects, Santana's, 'Jingo' from a box of cassettes, the rhythm pulsating as the plane accelerates down the runway.

**EXT.** They circle the airfield first before a downward sweeping pass over two, five foot, bamboo stakes along an open field of mowed grass, running along the side of one of the runways.

They release the hook; it drops & catches a length of rope stretched across the top of the stakes attached to our banner at the end of an additional two hundred feet of rope. Perfection & up sails an enormous banner, 'Miami's Annual Marlin & Sail Fishing Tournament, December 5, 1972'.

**NOTE-** See YouTube, 'How do planes fly & drop off those giant advertising banners'.

11

**INT.** SOUTH LAUDERDALE, LAURA HEMINGWAY'S HOME. OFFICE ALCOVE.

TELEPHONE RECEIVER

Ring, ring. Ring, ring . . .

Santana's 'Jingo', continues on the turntable over the ringing. We see only LAURA HEMINGWAY's tanned, shapely long legs down to her pink, painted toenails, propped up against the desktop alcove. Panning up, a 2'x 3' vintage tourist poster, features a bathing suit beauty with rod & reel, posing with a big marlin.

LAURA reaches out & grasps a giant slice of pizza loaded with various toppings, plated on the office counter. The needle rises on the record as the phone is finally answered.

FRANK (bartender at Giovanni's)

Yello, Giovanni's, Frank speaking.

View shifts across to a poster of the 1972, Miami Dolphins Football Schedule. Finished scores, inked in, display Miami's record, 5-0. Next game; Buffalo at home October 22, followed by at New York, October 29. (the schedule manipulated to meet our storyline, at New York now week seven, the St. Louis & San Diego are now road games & at Baltimore, pushed back to December)

LAURA

Hi Frank, Laura Hemingway.

FRANK

Hemingway, hey!

LAURA

How's business?

FRANK

Both the restaurant & bar, pretty busy lately.  
How's the charter fishing?

LAURA

Struggling.

FRANK

Oh?

LAURA

I've had the 'Cellar Door' in the shop with saltwater corrosion on the twin Mercury engines for two, going on three weeks now.

FRANK

Bummer.

LAURA

Suppose to get her back sometime this week & I can hardly wait to see the bill!

FRANK

I thought you bought a brand new boat?

LAURA

Looks new, but it's actually two years old. But on the plus side, the down time has given me a chance to get back to writing my novel.

FRANK

I wish I had more time to explore my creative side. Hey, I hear you put in a pool last summer. That has got to be nice!

LAURA

Very nice, but I've gone a little overboard with my surprise inheritance. I'm still making payments on both the truck & the boat & now, I finally started in on putting a new roof on the house.

FRANK

I'm sure Giovanni would hire you back, if you

wanted to pick up a shift or two?

LAURA

I promised myself that I would never go back to waiting tables or stripping. Plus, this cheerleading thing for the Dolphins has really helped expand my clientele, assuming I can get the Cellar Door back in the water again & soon!

FRANK

Understand.

LAURA

And who knows what the future holds, if I can ever get my novel finished & published?

FRANK

Keep fighting the good fight!  
So what can I do for you?

LAURA (conspiratorial)

Are you still booking bets with that friend of yours in Vegas?

FRANK (softly)

The phone never stops ringing. The vig is still ten per-cent on your winnings.

LAURA (POV of the schedule)

Thinking this week's game with Buffalo is a toss up? What's the current spread the following Sunday, Fish versus Joe Namath & the Jets at their place?

FRANK

Let's see? We got Miami giving 7½ to the Jets.

LAURA'S hands fanning through several bills, unopened & repeat bills.

LAURA

Give me five, no six bills on the Dolphins!  
And Frank, I don't care if I have to run out onto the field & tackle old Joe myself. There is no way the Fish can't cover 7½.

FRANK

It's a bet! Hey, that reminds me, you never did tell me about your run in with Lenny Dawson, the old Chiefs quarterback, on opening day this year?

LAURA

You'll like this Frank. After the game I found myself in a limo with the infamous, Leonard Dawson. There were like eight or nine of us, all sitting on top of one another, eating mushrooms, high as kites & Lenny had on this Ronald Reagan mask.

FRANK

What?

LAURA (her best Reagan impersonation)

Kept calling me, 'Young fellow' & telling stories about his movie, 'Hellcats in the Navy'.

FRANK

Shrooming with Lenny the cool!

LAURA

I was pretty messed up, but I'm pretty sure it was Lenny under the mask? He was so hilarious & his Reagan impersonation was so right on. 'Welll, praise the Lord' & ah, 'Pass the ammunition, Nancy!' & 'Take her down, dive, dive, dive!' He really grooved on me & kept referring to me as Nancy, his wife, who was his co-star in the film.

FRANK

Oh my!

LAURA

Valentina took a great photograph of the two of us, him in his mask, just before we rolled him out at some palatial mansion in Mission Hills.

FRANK

Sounds like you had a great time!

LAURA

All the road games have been so much fun! So anyway, Valentina & I will see you the following Monday, to pick up & maybe even parlay some of the winnings. And of course, celebrate!

FRANK

Wear your cheerleader costumes when you come in! It would be great for business & tips at the bar!

LAURA giggles & noshes the last of the slice of pizza.

LAURA

Costumes, we'll see? Thanks Frank!

The next stacked record mysteriously drops & plays on the turntable as she gathers up the empty plate, the desk phone on a long extension cord & pads foreword through the expansive living room. Stained glass lampshades light tropical palms, mismatched comfort furniture, stereo speakers, a Peaches Records crate of albums & a foam green Fender guitar leaning against a small amp.

She drops the plate & phone off next to a message-recording machine on the kitchen divider. In the kitchen, a large framed photo print of LAURA with sunglasses & the masked Ronald Reagan.

From the divider, she picks up a hurricane glass of iced Sangria, a scripted, initials M & M, gold lighter, a spiral green notebook with a No 2 pencil attached, cigarettes & movie star sunglasses.

Juggling, pads over, pulls open together, the curtain & sliding glass backdoor & we are immediately blinded by sunlight & a whoosh of cool ocean breeze. Steps outside & closes the sliding screen door behind her.

**EXT.** Outside, our eyes quickly acclimate & are greeted by a beautiful sky blue pool, an iron gated, white washed expansive concrete deck with several potted, tall, wind swept palms.

Opens & adjusts the volume from a metal cupboard that runs flush along the wall as the stereo music continues on hidden, outdoor speakers. We follow her shadow out along the deck & view the ocean where a twin-engine, V hull, Cigarette speedboat races across the horizon.

Looking back from the beach, we finally see whom the long legs belong to & we question the 'surprise inheritance', telephone storyline as she appears to be the opportunist in the old pickup truck from the bank robbery back in January.

Tanned, 23ish, lanky, swimmers fit with natural full figure curves, disheveled, long thick wheat blonde hair, dark brown doe eyes, thick brows & lashes, wearing a conservative, multi-color stripe, two piece swim suit.

She sets her things down on a little table next to a large, glass ashtray before sitting down herself, facing north on a generous white beach toweled, chase lounge, positioned  $\frac{3}{4}$  upright.

**NOTE:** Picturing a young, Kate Upton look alike, for the role of LAURA HEMINGWAY.

She slips on the big sunglasses, shakes out a perfectly rolled ganja smoke from the cigarette pack, twirls it wet in her mouth & lights it with the gold M & M lighter. Two short tokes followed by a long, dizzying drag chased with a long drink of Sangria.

The gentle breeze plays with her abundant hair. Leafing open the notebook, we settle on a page titled, 'The Cellar Door', followed by a story scripted in capital letters, skipping every other line with procrastinating fish & boat doodles along the borders.

Mindscaping, she begins poking her pencil, eraser end down, around her various body parts, like a personal fat test.

LAURA

Sincere intentions & endless obstacles. ..  
Intersecting story lines tangled in uncertainty  
& suspense. You've always had the power Dorothy,  
to find your way home again.

In the wind, we hear the hum of a small plane, closing, coming in low from the north along the coast.

LAURA watches curious as it comes into view, falcon like in design, flying right up to & then suddenly down upon her, whooshing by, insane show off close with a wing tilt admiration wave as its winged shadow races across the concrete deck. We note the trailing script on its enormous banner, 'Miami's Annual Marlin & Sail Fishing Tournament, December 5, 1972'.

Before it disappears into the southern sky, we hear the plane's engine sputter, stop. .. & catch again. Mesmerized, inspired,

LAURA takes another long pull from her drink & begins to write.

12

**EXT.** NIGHT FALL, FLAMINGO PARK, MIAMI, FL. COOL & BREEZY.

**Graphic-** Democratic National Convention, 1972

Quaalude Alley

DNC convention encampment. Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Hippies & Youth in Protest, 'the great unwashed masses'.

Flamingo Park, Miami, Florida

Two Nam veterans riding choppers, long hair, sniper bonnie hats, cycle past a Good Humor wagon before passing a lighted billboard with Dem presidential candidate photos led by George McGovern.

Turning past the entrance sign, they roll into the park where campfires light the night; smoke swirling, drifting in & about the trees & tropical vegetation, tents with bamboo stick poles display various flags. Stage speakers filter, Mathews Southern Comfort, 'Woodstock', throughout the park.

**VOICE OVER-** background chatter begins when the bikers roll past the Good Humor wagon over the music.

V.O. HIPPIY 1

Your typical Dick Nixon minions! Gangsters, Cuban exiles, rogue CIA & FBI flunkies.

V.O. HIPPIY 2

Like the stooges that got nabbed burglarizing the DNC headquarters at the Watergate Hotel last June.

V.O. HIPPIY 1

Man the same! So anyway, dig this. They plan to set off a bomb or shoot a few people here in the park & blame it on the Veterans. Create a lot of chaos & confusion.

V.O. HIPPIY 2

Chaos & mayhem!

V.O. HIPPIY 1

Then block all the roads & raise the drawbridges off South Beach. Bring in the police & the guard. Full riot gear! Dogs, tear gas, nightsticks & exact some serious, fucking pain! An all out, free for all. Make the convention in Chicago look like a Girl Scout picnic!

V.O. HIPPIY 2

So we got a plan?

V.O. HIPPIY 1

Myself & a group of veterans from Gainesville plan on creating diversions all around the city. Attacking & blowing up federal buildings, divert the police & guard away from the park & the beach & ..



**NOTE-** See web, Gainesville's Eight true back-story, Watergate & eventual VVAW Trial & Acquittal.

**NOTE-** Flamingo Park in actuality, is a former Polo field, open, flat & near treeless, a gift to the city by one of the early land barons. For the scene to be cinematic, we're filming a more traditional park, gentle hills, picnic tables, benches, large Florida native trees & vegetation.

Muting the neighboring, Voice Over conversation, we gather in on one little campfire where they're passing a fat doobie. Among them, sitting next to each other on canvas strap, aluminum chairs are LAURA HEMINGWAY & her best friend VALENTINA DEGAS. Next to LAURA is ZIGMUND, whom we see offer the girls a Quaalude, which they early accept, split & take with drink, giggling.

VALENTINA, 22ish, Latino, physically similar to LAURA, swimmer's fit with natural generous curves, lanky, full brows & lashes, long, thick, jet-black luminous hair, inviting dark doe eyes. The two wearing faded, rock band logo tee shirts & bell-bottoms jeans with patchwork, flip flops, simple leather bracelets & ties in their hair. Nodding to LAURA, hitting & passing on the doobie.

VALENTINA (sexy Spanish accent)  
Check it out Laura, Sha'mores.

Across the fire, WILLOW, 18ish, clover flower necklace, finishing & passing two whole, graham cracker S'mores to others in the group before meticulously, prepping four marshmallows, on an unusual four pointed carved stick for the next go round.

LAURA breaks her concentration on the new S'more build & turns back to ZIGMUND; faded Cardinal's baseball cap, John Lennon circle wire rim glasses, University of Missouri tee shirt.

LAURA (conspiratorial)  
Hey Zigmund.

ZIGGY  
Call me Ziggy.

LAURA (taking his arm)  
Hey Ziggy, you think I could trouble you for say, an entire roll of Quaaludes?

ZIGGY  
Kind of expensive.  
But I'm fair. Come fifteen to a roll.

LAURA (pressing in)  
How fair & how expensive?

ZIGGY (pushing up his glasses)  
Well, think you can you do, fifty. ..?  
I mean forty. .. Is forty fair?

LAURA  
I'll take three!

ZIGGY

Three?

LAURA

Rolls.

ZIGGY

Wow, okay. You bout cleaned me out. But that's cool, I know where I can go to get more.

ZIGGY, his knap sack hooked on the back of his camp chair, LAURA, a leather, tasseled shoulder bag, fans & folds one-twenty over in exchange for three, gold foil wrapped rolls.

LAURA

Thank you Ziggy.

ZIGGY

My pleasure, Laurie. So hey, where you girls from?

LAURA

We're locals, South Lauderdale. Not far, just a few miles up the coast.

ZIGGY

Lauderdale, sure, I know where that is. What's you all's thing? Like you know, what do you'll do for bread down here?

LAURA

Valentina & I charter fishing trips. I own a bitchin, forty-two foot Starcraft, Sport Fisherman Commander with twin, 330 outboard Mercury engines.

Passing over a business card from her purse, pictures LAURA & VALENTINA, posing in front of her, Sport Fisherman Commander.

ZIGGY (examining the card)

Forty-two footer, eh. Far out!

LAURA

It's pretty nice. If you all going to be in town for a while after the convention, look us up for a charter.

ZIGGY

Okay.

LAURA

And hey, you never know when we might run into a big tuna, or even a sail or a giant marlin.

ZIGGY

Thanks! We'll have to see how the week goes.

LAURA

Cool! And you charter for free, my friend.

VALENTINA'S still fixated on the four marshmallows, slow roasting over the fire to a golden brown, now being stacked & temporary plated. Each of the large S'more consists of two marshmallows

sandwiched between two whole Nestle chocolate bars & crowned top & bottom with a whole, graham cracker.

VALENTINA (Girl Scout salutes)  
Say WILLOW. Scout to Girl Scout. You think you could make me one of those amazing, S'mores?

WILLOW (returns the salute)  
How about I just give you & ah, Laurie these two?

VALENTINA  
I can or we can wait, for the next go around if. ..

WILLOW (S'more is short for, 'some more')  
No, please, you're our guest & I have plenty more, or I have, some more, s'mores', to s'mare with s'mareryone?

Willow giggling as the two stand, wobbly legged from sitting too long, passes, individually wrapped in paper towels dripping with chocolate & marshmallows, over the fire to VALENTINA.

They're sha-hot!

VALENTINA  
Thank you sho, muuuuch!

LAURA (standing)  
Oh my gosh! Yes, thank you Willow!

WILLOW  
My pleasure girls!

LAURA (sitting down, checking her watch)  
Dang, look at the time, Val. I'm going to suggest we all start heading over to the stage, especially if you & I want to get front row close & maybe even a little personable with the first couple of country?

Pan up to the sky & dolly over & down to the make shift stage. LAURA & VALENTINA in the shadows, seated in their canvas strap chairs off to on one side, front row, gazing up at the stars & the moon, feet propped against the low sitting baseboard, stoned, enjoying the Smore's. Occasional pinging can be heard from the band, tuning their instruments over Marvin Gaye's, 'Mercy, mercy me', playing softly through the center stage, sound speakers.

VALENTINA  
Here we are, front row!

LAURA  
Tammy Wynette & George Jones. Does it get any better than this?

VALENTINA (giggling, Marvin Gaye's lyrics)  
Righteous right. Everything is. .. everything.

LAURA

Who knew Quaaludes could be so, hummmm, trippy!

VALENTINA (pulling back her hair)  
If I were any higher, I'm afraid my hair  
might get tangled in the stars?

LAURA  
Tangled in the stars.

VALENTINA  
It's a line from a new song I've been working on.

LAURA  
We got to, so jam later tonight!

VALENTINA  
We got's to! . . .

LAURA (a few moments later)  
So, hey Val?

VALENTINA  
Hey Laur?

LAURA  
I've got a secret. Been meaning to share it with  
you for some time now.

VALENTINA  
Uh oh?

LAURA  
No, it's nothing like that, but it does go back a  
ways, back to my last day at Giovanni's. That Friday  
night when that couple dined & dashed on me.  
Stiffed me for the dinners, drinks, a bottle of wine  
& that ridiculously, expensive bottle of champagne.

VALENTINA  
I remember.

LAURA  
And Giovanni, the dick, made me cover the check  
out of my tips after working a double & the balance  
out of my paycheck!

VALENTINA  
Right. But then it was that following afternoon.  
Saturday? You got the big surprise inheritance  
check in the mail from your Aunt Helen!

LAURA  
Well, it was kind of like that. Actually, I think  
I ran into that same couple, the ones who stiffed me,  
when I went to my bank that Saturday morning.

VALENTINA  
Way?

LAURA  
Way! I'm sitting in my car after scripting a check

for the balance in my account, when all of a sudden. ..

One by one, light bulbs flash on around the perimeter of the intimate stage.

Oh wait, wait, here we go Val!

VALENTINA

Look at the stage! This is crazy Laur!

The two being silly, slapping & pushing on each other with excitement! A spot light showers George Jones, center stage as he begins playing his guitar, 'For what it's Worth', by Buffalo Springfield or possibly, 'The Weight', by The Band or even a Glen Campbell song, like 'Gentle on my Mind' or 'Wichita Lineman'.

Then Tammy Wynette, the first lady of country begins to sing, slipping out of shadows & into a second light. The rest of the band joins in & the performance quickly turns surreal with applause sprinkling & building through out the park as the various groups leave their campfires & gather around the stage.

**NOTE-** See YouTube covers, 'Gentle On My Mind' & or 'Stand by your Man' by Rachel Horter, whom I recommend for the role of Tammy Wynette in our little film. Tammy & George performed for the DNC in the park, 1972, true story!

**13**

**INT.** FBI BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C., ART & ANTIQUITIES CRIME UNIT, WAREHOUSE & OFFICE SPACE

**Graphic-**

Art & antiquities crime unit, warehouse & office space. FBI Building, Washington, D.C.

A generic hallway at the door to the Art & Antiquities warehouse. Knocking with her forehead, agent NATASHA BASTIANELLI, hands full with two large slices of apple pie, each dolloped twice with ice cream & two cups of coffee. The warehouse functions as storage for faux & real, art & antiquities & office work space.

Agent POLINA FONTAINE, aliases, Alaina Turner, Monica Lake, opens the door. This office sectional features a vintage coffee table, opposing Queen Anne chairs, antique couch, an aquarium with exotic fish, Middle Eastern floor carpets, large planted palms & Tiffany lamp lighting. Above the couch hangs the self-portrait by Raphael, 'Portrait of a Young Man', stolen by Nazis, historians regarding it as the most important missing painting since WWII.

The two agents, business suits, ID badges, hair up do.

POLINA (opening the door)

Oh, my!

NATASHA

Coming through!

She sets a pie slice & a coffee at each end of the coffee table, the two get comfortable in the Queen Anne chairs, occasionally

substituting any one of the romance languages for English.

POLINA

Two scoops of ice cream, thank you Natasha!

NATASHA

Hey, why not, nobodies here today. ..

POLINA (eating)

This pie, freaking yummy!

NATASHA

And the crust, simply perfection!

POLINA

Yes, remind me to thank the chief when he comes in.

NATASHA

So Polina, I'm so excited about your temporary assignment to the Miami office!

POLINA

Together again, the original, antiquities & art crimes class of 68!

NATASHA

I remember graduation night, when J. Edgar himself, pinned a medal on you.

POLINA

The old girl took a liking to me.

NATASHA

And I hear he still does?

POLINA (adding her Hoover impression)

Every Monday when I was in Marseille, unraveling the French Connection with the Bureau of Narcotics, he'd late night call me with the same inconspicuous greeting.

'Good evening Polina. Please favor me with the latest on operation, French Disconnection, por favour.'

NATASHA

I love it!

POLINA

I would always embellish my replies with a little extra, back room titillation & bad guy gunplay.

NATASHA

You know, he probably taped all your conversations.

POLINA

I would be extremely disappointed if he didn't.

NATASHA

We'll go out tonight & share some war stories & I'll fill you in on what's going on in South Florida.

POLINA

Lets!

NATASHA

Oh, I'd forgotten that you once modeled for this artist guy from Denver?

POLINA

Nathaniel Moon, a real sweetie!

NATASHA

Who now resides just north of Miami?

POLINA

Right. The Chief still believes he's either got or knows the whereabouts of those museum paintings from the Denver art heist of 59' & would like them found before he retires.

NATASHA

He definitely has a sentimental side.

POLINA

And he wants to show some additional recoveries before he heads up to the hill to ask Nixon & congress for some additional funding.

NATASHA

So you were telling me that you were having some funding issues of your own.

Briefly cut to the inquisitive eyes on the Raphael self-portrait.

POLINA (conspiratorial)

You know what I dislike the most about working for the Justice Department.

NATASHA (smiling)

Let me guess, all the partying & whoring around?

POLINA

No, I said what I like the least! (giggling) No, it's the fact that the job doesn't pay anything! Wouldn't it be nice if some of the recovery dollars trickled down to the agents in the field. The ones who are putting it all on the line day after day.

NATASHA

Why doesn't the agency just put a finder's fee on these wealthy art collectors & museums like the big insurance companies do?

POLINA

Exactly, I mean I love the overseas travel & all the Tomfoolery. And I love a great double cross as much as the next gal. But I guess I can forget about any dreams of ever owning a nice home, maybe with a modest flower garden, a few rows for vegetables. ..

NATASHA (dreamy face)

A tennis court, a view of the Potomac, maybe with a few horses out back, which is why you are going to love your assignment in Miami. We're all on the take down there! It's money, money & more money with all that cocaine flooding in from. ..

A knock on the office door interrupts NATASHA who quickly scoots over with her pie & coffee to the couch. Enter GUY SHARPE, Art & Antiquities director, 65ish, glasses, handsome, tailored suit; all business, takes a seat on the vacated Queen Ann chair.

GUY (opening a file folder)

Hello ladies. I trust you both had a nice weekend?

Fanning out photos of the stolen Remington & the two Geromes.

14

**EXT.** MID DAY HOT & HUMID, NED MOON'S TWO STORY MODEST HOME ON THE INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY, SOUTH LAUDERDALE. A HALF DOZEN CARS PARKED ALONG THE ROAD LEADING UP TO THE DRIVEWAY. THE WYNETTE & JONES'S COVER SONG FROM THE CONCERT IN THE PARK, CONTINUES.

LAURA, a sea foam green Fender lead guitar & VALENTINA with a black Fender bass guitar, strapped low over their backsides, pass our familiar, 49' Coupe De Ville, Cadillac parked closest to the garage. Big sunglasses, conservative skirts, simple short sleeve, anatomy fitting, frill collar blouses & flip-flop footwear.

Pausing at the open garage, eating the last of their hot dogs, heavy with kraut & mustard held in check with paper wrappers, note the 1969 Chevy Chevelle SS, 396, two door, stripped of all its chrome & badges on blocks, freshly painted butternut yellow with taped, outlined rally stripes down the hood & trunk.

VALENTINA (sexy Spanish accent)

He's a car guy.

LAURA

69 Chevelle.

VALENTINA

That yellow's going to really pop when he finishes those rally stripes!

They shoot the hotdog wrappers into a trash barrel just inside the garage door. VALENTINA yields two, half dollar size, after dinner chocolate mints from her purse before they circle around to the front door.

LAURA (guitars hidden on their backsides)

Ready?

VALENTINA, chewing the last of her mint, holding up a finger.

VALENTINA

Go!

LAURA knocks. The painted blue, weathered door opens. NED peeps around cautious as the Wynette & Jones cover song ends.



NED  
Hi there, may I help you?

LAURA (queries authority)  
You be one, Nathaniel Moon?

NED (queries surprise)  
Yes mam.

LAURA (smiles, holding out a hand)  
Hi, I'm Laura Hemingway. ..  
& this be my good friend, Valentina Degas.

VALENTINA (poking her head around)  
Hola.

LAURA  
We're here to the audition for the band.

NED (smiles relief, door swings open)  
Laura Hemingway, okay, sure! And Valentina?

VALENTINA  
Degas.

NED  
Degas! Hola. Hello. Come in. Por favor. Call  
me Ned. Nice to finally meet you all. .. in person.

LAURA (removing their sunglasses)  
Sorry, we're running so late.

NED  
No, problemo. Happy you all made it! Just  
surprised me a little.

LAURA  
Yeah?

NED  
Yeah, I just had a ah, different mental image for  
the two of you.

**INT.** Closing the door behind them.

So, I've heard some nice things about you'll.

NED, military cargo shorts, (hemmed Viet Nam uniform trousers  
into cargo shorts, he wears army green or brown throughout the  
movie) a crisp white T-shirt with a Ernest Hemingway face  
portrait, sockless, worn Converse canvas black tennis shoes.

LAURA  
Like wise. Hey, nice T-shirt!

NED (embarrassed)  
Awe thanks, I wore it just for you Laura.

Laura leans in & presses the image smooth with her hands on his

chest, up close, aggressive.

LAURA  
I've always liked this image of Ernest.

NED (shy)  
Me to.

VALENTINA (pressing into the living room)  
Nice place! Umm, the air conditioning feels great!

NED  
It's pretty hot & humid out there, right?  
Suppose to storm, later on this evening.

VALENTINA  
I believe you!

NED  
So I understand you know Patrick, our drummer.

LAURA  
Right. The three of us went to high school together.  
He said you're looking for singers, maybe with guitar  
skills. That you're putting together a little band or  
just some friends to jam with?

NED  
A little of both, although this morning I  
came up a cool name for a band?

VALENTINA  
What you got?

NED  
The Harvest Jane Band.

VALENTINA  
Jane? Harvest Jane? Like harvesting the  
Mary Jane, the good weed?

NED  
Yes!

VALENTINA  
I like it! Laura?

LAURA  
Clever & catchy. Thumbs up for me!

NED  
It's settled then. Now, if we can just get  
someone named Mary Jane to join the band?

VALENTINA  
This is going to be a lot of fun!

LAURA  
Wow, check out this living room Val, I mean  
Mary Jane.

White walls & white tile flooring, fabric comfort sofa & chairs with dark stained wood trim, numerous palms & a big aquarium; a Colonial West Indies theme. A dozen large photo-realistic, many unfinished, oil paintings, featuring various combinations of cars, planes, vintage schooners, westerns, women & wildlife blanket the walls. The Remington painting, Stampede by Lighting, faux or real, hanging centered above the sofa.

LAURA notes a double barrel shot gun, seeming out of place & a box of shells on the busy, living room coffee table.

NED

Make yourselves at home. Just lean your guitars ...  
or up against the chair is fine or .. .

Slipping off their guitars, they walk the room, surveying,  
admiring the various paintings.

VALENTINA

Thanks Ned. And again, sorry we're so late.  
We were at a meeting for this charity idea,  
that Laura & I are working on.

NED

Yeah?

VALENTINA

A little fundraiser to purchase a wide variety of  
musical instruments for an orchestra program that  
were putting together with a couple teacher friends  
at Lauderdale, elementary.

NED

An orchestra, like a marching band. ..

VALENTINA

Beyond just the marching. Rock & roll, Blues,  
country, classical, show tunes, jazz. The  
whole shabang!

NED

I would have loved an opportunity like that as  
a child. Playing a little guitar rock & roll with  
my fellow class mates in an orchestrated setting.  
Then mixing in a little of Tchaikovsky's, Swan  
Lake, say on a violin, for me Mom & Dad.

VALENTINA

Every child deserves that opportunity. Learning  
covers, creating rhythms, writing melodies &  
everything that comes with it. Self discipline,  
perseverance, self-esteem, problem solving, hum. ..

NED

Language & reasoning, patience, ah, creativity,  
ingenuity. ..

VALENTINA

Where were you when we were giving our sales

pitch to the School Board this morning?

NED

No, I really like where you're going with this.

LAURA

It would be a part of every student's, basic, everyday curriculum, starting at say, grade one!

NED

And by the time the first group of students are seniors? Look out! A dozen years of writing & playing together. Musical geniuses! Yes?

VALENTINA

Yes, & think of all the concerts & musicals the school could put on throughout the year as fund raisers. Capacity filled stadiums, with all the schools in a district performing & even competing. Paying it forward with ticket sales to the next class of students. New instruments, teacher salaries, expanding & improving the school's overall curriculum.

LAURA

It's all so simple!

NED

An educational gold mine!

LAURA

Now we both love to sing along to the radio & even started writing a few of songs of our own but my guitar skills are somewhat limited, but Val here can really play & improvise, just about anything on her Bass.

NED

Cool, you all should fit right in.

LAURA

So who's in to all this original art?

NED

I've been known to pick up paintbrush or two. Check out the details on the one next to that one, Valentina. The lady posing with the shotgun, leaning up against the Cadillac, with the mountain lion lurking there in the foreground.

VALENTINA slides over one, LAURA now examining the Remington.

VALENTINA

Very nice! Really creative!

LAURA

Indeed Ned, but this one's, different? I think I've seen this painting before in a book or maybe it was a magazine? This signature says, Frederic. ..

NED

Remington. As in the, Frederic Remington. A perfect forgery of one of his most famous paintings, stolen from the Denver Museum of Art, a dozen years ago or so.

Occasional guitar pinging & drumming can be heard upstairs to the intro to 'Venus', by Shocking Blue.

LAURA

A perfect forgery? So has the original ever been recovered?

NED

Not that I'm aware of?

LAURA

There's even a little faux crackling in the paint as if it were painted sometime back around the turn of the century. Probably pretty valuable. I mean if one were actually able to pass it off as the original?

NED

There's a hundred thousand dollar reward for the recovery of the Remington & two other European paintings.

LAURA

A hundred thousand dollars. Did you hear that Mary Jane?

Leaning in close on one of the other paintings.

VALENTINA

Yes I did, Laura. Yes I did!

LAURA

So Ned, is everybody upstairs?

NED

Right. Right, but before we head up, follow me to the kitchen.

NED points & heads for the kitchen, they follow picking up their guitars, strapping them over their shoulders, low on their hips.

I was just finishing refreshing some drinks when you girls knocked. Can I mix you something?

A tray of mixed drinks in various, tall, 1972 Taco Bell, Pepsi, Looney tunes cartoon glasses sit on a tray next to a rolled, fat doobie in an ashtray. Ned pulls down two additional cartoon glasses from his extensive collection.

VALENTINA

Sure, let's see? How about that vodka there with a splash of cranberry & a fat lime wedge & I'll go with Sylvester the Cat, please.

LAURA looking in, spearing a half dozen olives from a jar, devouring them as NED ices up the two cartoon glasses.

NED  
Laura, that leaves Tweety bird for you.

LAURA  
Hum, make it easy. Same for me, please.

NED  
One more of the same.

NED mixes the drinks, bartender quick & picks up the doobie, frisking himself for a lighter.

I assume you ladies partake?

VALENTINA  
Yes we do!

LAURA  
I got ya Ned. No, you go first.

LAURA comes in eyeball close & lights his smoke with her gold M & M, scripted lighter. NED a short toke, then a long dizzying drag, a stoner's grin & gestures the smoke to LAURA.

LAURA  
Yeah Ned! Thank you!

NED  
Sugar Cane Red, Northern Lights primo, musicians delight & I might say, singer friendly. (exhaling)

LAURA accepts the smoke, two short taste tokes, then a long, deep toke as well, leaning back against the cabinets, her blouse taut against her chest. Holding the smoke up in the air, gesturing it to VALENTINA, then chases it with a long pull from her drink.

Wow, rock & roll, nice! (giggling, exhaling)

VALENTINA, taste tokes, then a very long toke; blindly offers the smoke back to NED. Musical intros coming from the upstairs again.

NED  
Hold on to it & follow me. Careful on the stairs.

VALENTINA a quick hit & passes it back to LAURA, last to follow, notices an ad poster for flights to the Caribbean, with NED, wearing a Nam hat pulled low, standing in front of an airplane at the doorway entrance to the stairs. The plane, fully painted & beautifully detailed, appears to be the same plane that winged overhead while she was writing out at her pool.

LAURA  
Wait, wait a minute. Is this you Ned in the poster?

NED (looking back)  
I run a little advertising business up & down the beach & I'm chartering flights to the Keys & the Caribbean. In fact, I've got a charter

to the Caymans, tomorrow morning.

LAURA

I'm pretty sure I've seen you & your plane before,  
all though it was just briefly.

NED

Possible, I do get around.

VALENTINA backing down one stair for a look see at the poster.

VALENTINA

What about a flight to South America, maybe  
somewhere like, Columbia?

NED (smiling)

I've modified the fuel tanks, so that's a possibility?

VALENTINA

This is so surreal. We have to talk about this later.

NED

Sure. So we ready?

LAURA

Ready.

The music room, expansive, smoky, box window air conditioning cool, mood lighting, vintage lampshades, speakers, amps, a stand up piano, mismatch easy chairs, a singing mike on a stand, room centered. Pull shades, pulled down, except one, window fresh-air open. Musician types & a few friends fill the room.

NED separates leaving the ladies room center; table tops the tray of drinks; everyone helping themselves to their personal cartoon glass before the intro.

NED

Let me introduce everybody to a couple very cool friends of Patrick who will be sitting in with us today.

A little drum roll, acknowledgment from Patrick.

First a singer & a guitarist, the lovely Miss Laura Hemingway. And the equally talented, & just as lovely, bass guitarist & singer, Miss Valentina, Mary Jane, Degas.

Lots of, hi's, nice to meet you, I'm so & so . . .

PATRICK (prompting the girls on)

Either one of you know, or would like to try singing, I'm your Venus, by The Shocking Blue?

LAURA

I love that song! I'll give it a go.

NED

The mic is all yours! Valentina, you want to jump in on your Bass?

VALENTINA

Sure!

There is nothing hotter or more cinematic than a woman playing bass guitar.

DAWN

Here, let me show you where you can plug in.

JIMMY

Let me give this guitar back to the master.

NED

Are you sure. It sounded pretty good from downstairs.

JIMMY (passing the guitar to Ned)

Ned here, is the real deal on the guitar ladies.

NED

Jimmy, my biggest fan.

NED pings & tunes a few strings to the intro. VALENTINA returns pings the bass line & nods, I'm good.

Jenny, what do you say for posterity? We go ahead & record this first take.

JENNY on piano, drops a Maxwell cassette as Ned counts it down.

Laura? Valentina? Everybody else?

I can already tell, this is going to be really good!  
One & two & four & three & . . .

NED begins the intro, nods at VALENTINA, who follows on her bass, followed by the rest of the musicians, then a wink to LAURA.

When ever you're ready Laura.

LAURA, a long pull from her drink waiting for the intro to come all away around again, stoned & a little nervous, suddenly transforms herself, faux poses & vibes the groovy, Mariska Veres, lead singer for Shocking Blue.

LAURA

A goddess on a mountain top, was burning like a silver flame, the summit of beauty and love, and Venus was her name. . .

A very cool interpretation, improvisational strumming & piano playing cover of the iconic, 1969 hit song.

Scene ends with a female groupie, turning, rotating in her swivel chair to the open window. Aloof, stoned, she rests her chin on her hands, arms folded parallel along the windowsill as we look out with her at the ominous, storm clouds painting the horizon in dark washes of violet, Payne's grey & Shocking Blue.



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**INT.** NED, FRESHLY SHAVED, AVIATOR SUNGLASSES, LIGHT BLUE PIN STRIPED FLIGHT COVERALLS WITH A 'Moon Charters' LOGO SEWED INTO THE CHEST POCKET, PILOTING THE CESSNA 'FALCON' 402, OVER GRAND CAYMAN ISLAND

Two passengers, one a conservative male, 55ish, blue poplin suit & a 26ish, leggy female, similarly poplin suited. 'Venus' with creative instrumentals, continues playing on cassette inside the insulated cabin & headsets.

**EXT.** ATC landing instructions overlooking beautiful Grand Cayman Island below. The plane, strikingly painted & detailed, a Nam, Seventh Squadron, 17<sup>th</sup> Cavalry, HHT flag design, port side nose.

The wing dips, the plane banks, the seat belted passengers are suddenly skewed parallel. Swooping down, falcon like & level out to a pinpoint landing at Grand Cayman International Airport.

**INT.** Grand Cayman National Bank, the interior, old world grand, library quiet, evenly spaced individual negotiating desks with luminous green lampshades.

HENRY STONE, bank officer, 65ish, silver hair, tailored suit, tanned dark, leaning across his desk; lighting cigars for NED's passengers, CHARLES & ILLSA. A large duffel sits between them.

ILLSA

Thank you Henry.

And thank you for the tour of your beautiful bank.

HENRY STONE (sitting down)

You're welcome. Now please, please take a seat . . . And now ah, where was I?

ILLSA

A history lesson. About this little British Overseas Territory, Grand Cayman Island.

HENRY (clears his throat)

Oh yes, thank you Illsa. Well, our island story goes back to the 8<sup>th</sup> of February, 17 hundred & 94.

It was late in the evening, nightfall, the entire island under siege from a barbarous & ferocious tropical storm when a group of ten English merchant ships found themselves dangerously run aground, out on one of our reefs.

Numerous locals, the Caymanians, one being my relative went out in long boats, without any hesitation, risking their lives & rescued the crews & much of their cargo. The historical confrontation is commonly referred to as, The Wreck of the Ten Sails.

King George rewarded the islanders with a promise of never to introduce taxes as compensation for their courage & bravery as one of the ships carried a member of the King's own royal family.

Hence fourth, the Crown have never levied income, capital gains or wealth tax, making our island the perfect sanctuary for your securities & investments, which comes with a writ of absolute & complete anonymity. (sliding across two pens)

So in keeping with the spirit of our heroic forefathers, we would love the opportunity to earn your trust & confidence & open both personal & corporate accounts for each of you this afternoon.

We leave this conversation & move to another desk, an attractive, very tanned, young couple shaking hands farewell with their bank officer, gathering up document folders, sunlassing & exiting.

The couple, TOMMY MCQUEEN, shoulder length, sun streaked hair, divers watch, navy pressed bellbottom slacks, a yellow 'Sloppy Joe's', Key West logo tee shirt, sockless canvas oxfords & his girlfriend, alias MONICA LAKE, previous alias ALAINA TURNER, the Colorado model, government undercover agent, POLINA FONTAINE. She's wearing thin gold jewelry, yellow bellbottoms, a floral tank top & sockless canvas oxfords, her hair color now brick red. Intrigue & mystery, can the audience to make the connection.

**EXT.** NED MOON sits at the bank entrance, atop white washed concrete steps; sunglasses clipped to his shirt collar, his flight coveralls pulled down over his shoulders, sleeves tied loosely around his waist, enjoying a cold glass bottle of Coca Cola, looking out at cerulean blue waters, the breeze tangled in the tall palms.

The young couple, coming down the steps behind him. TOMMY slows, stops, a double take before removing his sunglasses.

TOMMY

Nathaniel Moon, Helo support team, 17<sup>th</sup> Air Cavalry?

NED (standing, saluting)

Tommy McQueen, Huey pilot, 9<sup>th</sup> Squadron Air Cavalry!

TOMMY

Huey green, duct tape, Ned Moon! What in the hell are you doing sitting out here all by yourself in the middle of paradise?

NED (the two hugging)

I'm chartering flights to the islands. I've got a client, back inside the bank there.

TOMMY

Charters?

NED

Got my pilot's license. Flying out of Lauderdale, Florida.

TOMMY

Look at you!

NED

Customized a busted up, 1969, Cessna 402. Replace the twin wing engines with a single Walter M601 & added two additional fuel tanks to the wings.

TOMMY

Two extra fuel tanks to the wings.

NED

It is pretty nice! Ferried a banker & his secretary over this morning. They're in there now, probably laundering thousands in coca trafficking, profits.

TOMMY

Funny you should mention trafficking or profiteering, as we like to think of it.

NED

Let me guess. You're here, doing the same?

TOMMY

We're flying around, laying the groundwork for a run. Oh, this is my girlfriend, Monica Lake. Monica, meet Nathaniel Moon.

NED

Hi Monica. Nice to meet you.

MONICA

And you as well, Nathaniel.

Hint of a French or Spanish accent, nearly unrecognizable behind her big sunglasses, red brick hair, dark tan, fitter & thinner than her appearance as an art model in Colorado.

TOMMY

Monica & I are on our way over to Jamaica's, Landry Airport this afternoon to try & square up some customs officials. Use the island as a possible jumping off point to South America.

NED (eyes still fixated on Monica)

So you have your own plane as well?

TOMMY

A lease. A 72', Beechcraft Bonanza A36. Flying out of Key West. I've got a little place on the water there.

Can't figure it out why MONICA looks so familiar. Give's up & engages his attention back to TOMMY.

NED

That's a nice plane.

TOMMY

It is! And from Jamaica we're flying down to Panama tomorrow morning to meet up with some airport officials & friends of Monica's to set

up a contact with a possible seller in Northern Chile.

NED

Chile? I thought all the cocaine was coming out of Columbia, or maybe as far away as Bolivia?

TOMMY

That's true & Columbia obviously is the closest, but there in the middle of a Civil War.

NED

So Bolivia?

TOMMY

Bolivia via Northern Chile as the Bolivians only cultivate the cocoa leaves into a relatively inexpensive paste that the locals mix with tobacco & regularly smoke.

NED

So the paste gets transported to Chile.

TOMMY

Down from the mountains & over the border by train rail to various labs in Northern Chile, where by mixing in a few chemicals, it's finally turned into cocaine.

NED

It all seems a little complicated?

TOMMY

Almost all of the finished product is shipped out of the port of Arica on the northern tip of Chile. We plan to skip the boat traffic & just fly it out of Chile.

NED

Sounds like you got a plan.

TOMMY

With the ever escalating popularity of cocaine across the country, we figure two, maybe three trips & we'll be set for life.

NED

It's strange running into you like this as I've got a couple crazy, new girl friends, that are trying to talk me into making a run.

TOMMY

Maybe it's one of those meaningful coincidences. Synchronicity.

NED

Jung's synchronicity. I remember you talking that on one of your hot food helo runs to the troops out along the Delta. A wink from the universe. Remember the butterfly & all that stuff?

TOMMY

And you were always among the first to volunteer!

NED

The guys were always so appreciative! Plus,  
that was some nerve racking, scary ass, fun!

TOMMY (offering his business card)

Hey, give us a week or two to put it all together  
& I'll provide you with all my contacts to simplify  
a run.

NED (trading a Moon Charter's card)

Hey thanks, sure.

TOMMY

Well, we got's to roll. And Moon, it was great  
to see you again.

NED

You to Tommy & nice meeting you, Monica.

MONICA (walking away)

Au revoir & good luck Nathaniel!

NED

Thanks & you as well!

**16**

**INT.** LAURA HEMINGWAY'S LIVING ROOM, SEMI VAULTED CEILING, PRE-  
DATE REMINISCING WITH NED & LAURA, BOTH DRESSED, DATE NIGHT NICE.

NED finishes rolling a doobie as a blender runs in the kitchen.  
He leans back on the couch, staring up at two large, taller than  
wider, abstract paintings on canvas stretchers, simple woodblock  
black frames, one on each side above the opposing couch on the  
room's, center support wall.

LAURA is over in the kitchen, mixing drinks. Her green notebook  
visible on the busy coffee table.

LAURA (blender stops)

I'm sorry, you finally decided to do what?

NED (calling out)

Sell my Dad's, Cadillac & keep the Chevelle as  
my every day driver. So after I pay a few bills,  
I got to find a new project car & soon.

LAURA

If you have to sell one, long term, you know  
that's the right move.

NED

You're right, I just hate to see it go.

LAURA coming into frame with two Pina Coladas, lime garnished,  
hurricane glasses.

LAURA

Authentic Pina Coladas!

NED (accepting one of the drinks)

Nice.

LAURA

I cracked open & pureed a couple coconuts this morning, tossed in a few chunks of frozen pineapple, a very healthy pour of Bacardi, a few times around the blender & voila!

NED

Cheers!

LAURA

Cheers Ned!

Starts to join NED on the couch, turns & pads over to the stereo.

NED

Ummmm, fantastic!

LAURA

Thanks! I almost forgot, I've got this cassette that I've been meaning to listen to. It's a demo tape from Greg Lake of Emerson, Lake & Palmer.

NED

The Greg Lake?

LAURA

Yeah, I met him at a nightclub after the San Diego game & we seem to have a lot in common. So cool & easy to talk to. Said he had been working on this new song for weeks & was to meet up with one of his producers for some feedback. The guy was a no show, so he gifted me the demo copy.

NED

Really?

LAURA

Said, he was thinking of someone just like me when he wrote the lyrics.

NED

This should be fun. Does it have a title?

LAURA (drops in the cassette, low volume)

Still, you turn me on!

LAURA preening, saunters back over to the couch. The intro lyrics, cerebral, magical, 'what kind of artist do you want to be?', circles back & repeats several times like a work in progress. A bonus track, an early version of 'From the Beginning', added so the music last the length of the scene.

LAURA

I like that intro, haunting & a little dreamy.

Ned lights the doobie with Laura's unique, Tiffany M & M lighter. The two pass the smoke back & fourth throughout the scene.

NED

I love how his voice briefly lingers, here & there. And I love these abstracts, all the complimentary colors.

LAURA (joining Ned on the couch)

My mom painted those. It was like one day she was suddenly inspired & whoosh! I walked in & there they were?

NED

So how long have you lived here?

LAURA

All my life. I grew up here with my mother & grandma, never knowing or having a father. Mom was an stewardess, which included the occasional, international flight, so she wasn't around much. Plus stewardesses back in the day were not only required to be of a certain age, weight & height, but also single & baron. So I was pretty much a secret.

NED

A secret?

LAURA

Yeah, I know. Crazy, right?

NED

A little bit?

LAURA

So Mom died when I was twelve. She was working an international flight to France. They found her, floating face down in a canal in Marseille, with a needle in her arm. The French police said it was a heroine overdose?

NED

Awe, that's so sad.

LAURA

My grandma thought she probably got herself murdered.

NED

What?

LAURA

Yeah, she remembers Mom's friends as being somewhat dubious, even dangerous! Especially the ones she associated with when she traveled abroad. But grandma said, there wasn't much we could do about it, the investigation being overseas & everything.

NED (playing with Laura's lighter)

You were twelve, so what year would that have been?

LAURA

59. December of 1959.

NED

Just shortly after my Dad died.

LAURA

I know, peculiar how we have that in common.

NED

It is. So then what, just you & grandma?

LAURA

Me & grandma. Then just about four years ago she passed away from complications after a stroke.

NED

Oh sorry. Siblings?

LAURA

Just me. Same with Valentina, we're both orphans like you. It all seems like such a long time ago. I was really depressed for a long time & eventually I went to see a therapist.

NED

What was that like or what kind of therapy?

LAURA

Self-discovery. Focusing on myself, my passions. Acknowledging my reality, then moving on by staying present & challenging myself.

NED (still playing with the lighter)

I kind of did the same to get over the loss of my father. .. & my mother. My memory isn't the best, like I was telling you about my guardian.

LAURA

The elderly Chinese sage who would occasionally have you vaping opium as a child.

NED

It was a form of a self-enlightenment. Quieting the mind. No longer defining myself by this is where I began & this is where I will end.

LAURA

I like that. No margins, infinite possibilities. You really like that lighter?

NED (noting the inscription)

It looks so familiar is all?  
'To Marilyn, with all my love, Joseph'

LAURA

It was my mother's. Tiffany. The scripted M & M on the side stands for Marilyn Monroe.

NED

Marilyn Monroe?

LAURA

A gift from Joseph Cotton to Marilyn during



their filming of the movie Niagara.  
My mother met Marilyn, working a flight from New York to Los Angeles after Marilyn finished the shoot. She said Cotton was married & couldn't keep his hands off of her & she wanted nothing to do with him. So she re-gifted the lighter to my Mom.

NED

Not at all surprising, as Marilyn was absolutely stunning in that film.

LAURA

Mom really loved her run in with Marilyn & it quickly became her good luck charm. She took it with her everywhere, but apparently forgot to take it with her on that last, fateful trip to Marseille.

NED

What a nice keepsake.  
Oh & speaking of celebrity encounters. Valentina said to ask you about your run in with Jane Fonda after the Wynette & George Jones concert in the park?

LAURA

Actually, it was Jane Fonda who came running up to me. It was late in the night & I was pretty messed up. Valentina doesn't even remember seeing her.

NED

Running up to you?

LAURA

Yes! She just came out nowhere, grabbed hold of my tee shirt & pulled me in close.

Laura scoots up on her knees on the couch & pulls Ned into her by his shirt collar, eyeball close & whispers.

Like she new me? Called me Karen & whispered all this stuff about Dick Nixon & the war?

NED

The president?

LAURA

Yes. Something or other about the 68' Paris peace conference? Treason? Lyndon Johnson's eleventh-hour efforts to end the war. Eaves dropping. Some sort of a Nixon conduit with South Vietnam's, President Thieu.

The message! 'Stand firm until after the election. Wheeler-dealer LBJ will sell you out. Dick Nixon is your man!' (her best Nixon impersonation)

NED

A Nixon conduit with Thieu? Stand firm?

LAURA

Right. Then she said, don't stop looking, I love you

Karen & kissed me on the cheek. (kisses NED softly on the cheek) Then just as quickly, she disappears? Whoosh. Gone. Lost in the haze & the night.

NED

The Peace conference, a put on, treason?. .. Karen?

LAURA (releasing Ned)

Valentina thought I was probably tripping?  
Oh, & here's an autographed picture of Tammy & George.  
Now that part of the evening was definitely real!

Reaching, climbing, awkwardly across on top of NED to a framed picture on the side table at the end of the couch & then back over him again, flirtatious, before handing him the picture.

NED (studying the picture)

Must have been quite the night, especially  
the part about meeting Jane Fonda like that?

LAURA

You don't believe me?

NED

It sounds believable as Thieu suddenly boycotted the peace talks just before the election after Johnson held a nationally televised press conference, 'My fellow Americans, this morning I'm happy to report, peace is at hand.' And here we are, still at war, all those lost souls, four years later.

LAURA

To be honest, I do have trouble distinguishing my aberrations from my every day reality as I've always had my suspicion's, that Nixon monkey wrenched the peace talks.

NED

You remind me a little of Oscar Wilde.

LAURA

Oscar Wilde?

NED

He said, he never travels anywhere without his diary. As one should always have something sensational to read on the train.

LAURA

It's more than a diary, it's my novel. My ticket to fame & success! And for me, I've got to get out & soak up a little inspiration. Especially, if I'm going to spend a good portion of my day manipulating space & time.

NED

Understandable, embellish & expand upon a memory.

LAURA (finishing her drink)

And I'm usually up for anything, unless it involves extreme heights, that's my kryptonite.

NED

So I'm not likely to find any plausible, celebrity run-ins on Ferris wheels or while skydiving in any of your novels.

LAURA (getting up playful, tossing a pillow at him)  
Drink up silly & let's roll! I'm suddenly ravenous!

NED (staggering up)

Let's bring the novel. I want to see if you found anything sensational about me to write about.

LAURA (coming back from the bedroom)  
Of course, you're in there!

NED (conspiratorial)

Well, I've got an interesting story line to add to my character. It's about your little inquiry on a possible cocaine run to South America.

LAURA

Yeah?

NED

I'm all in with the two of you as long as the fronting or the selling of the Remington can never be traced back to me.

LAURA (cassette demo ends)

That shouldn't be a problem? But now, I'm going to have to go back a chapter or two & create an alias for you. Give you a different name line.

Room lights click off.

NED

How about Ringo? No, not Ringo, Rick. Like the Bogart character in Casablanca, Ricky Blaine.

The door from the kitchen to the garage 'thumps' shut.

17

**INT.** JOE NAMATH'S APARTMENT, UPTOWN, CHILLY COLD, NEW YORK CITY.

Howard Cosell, sports commentary, Voice Over, victory highlights; party scene as bluesy jazz plays softly on the turntable.

V.O. HOWARD COSELL

Week seven saw Miami visiting their division rivals, Broadway's, Joe Willie Namath & the New York Jets. The Dolphins once again let their opponent tally first when guard Randy Rasmussen recovered a fumble in the end zone, giving the Joe & the Jets, the 7-0 early lead.

But Miami took over in the second quarter, scoring two touchdowns, a 16-yard pass from Griese to

Howard Twilley followed by a 6-yard Jimmy Kiick run. Going into halftime, the Dolphins led 14-7.

The Dolphins & Jets traded field goals during an uneventful third quarter.

Leading 17-10 going into the fourth, Miami slammed the door on the Jets with 3-yard, Jimmy Kiick, second touchdown run & a 43-yard Yepremian field goal, sandwiching a 1-yard Emerson Boozer touchdown run for the Jets. The game ended with Don Shula & the Dolphins, victorious, 27-17.

JOE NAMATH entertaining at his luxurious New York apartment, high ceilings, tall windows, mood lighting, big furniture, large potted plants, with Jets owner, ROBERT 'WOODY' JOHNSON IV & Dolphins owner JOE ROBY & his two guests, Miami cheerleaders LAURA HEMINGWAY & VALENTINA DEGAS, post game drink & celebration.

NAMATH, wide lapel suit, framed from behind by Leroy Neiman's original painting, 'Handoff - Super Bowl III', depicting Namath's handoff to Matt Snell, four-yard, second quarter clinching touchdown, 1969 Jets improbable victory over the Baltimore Colts. NAMATH is seated center on a three person, short couch.

LAURA & VALENTINA, pleaded satin cocktail dresses, heavy makeup, big hair, seated to each side of NAMATH with the team owners, conservative suits, flanked in chairs at opposing ends of a busy coffee table of drinks, hors d'oeuvres, cigars & an iced bucket of champagne on a metal scaffold stand.

VALENTINA sitting on NAMATH's, infamous, luxurious, full length, coyote fur coat. The Voice Over, game summary ends.

JOE NAMATH

I'm with you ladies, I love my Nieman originals!  
The brilliant, impressionistic colors really  
light up the room & give it a little extra, zing!

Looking back over his shoulder, impersonating Curt Gowdy's, call.

'New York inside the ten, here's a hand off  
to Snell, he may go!'

VALENTINA (nearly pitching over on top of Joe)  
Jets win, Jets win! We love you Joe!

WOODY (surveying other Niemans in the room)  
Nieman originals? And here I thought you spent  
all the money I pay you on women & fur coats.

JOE NAMATH

Well, that to Woody, I'm only human. But no, the  
art is a great investment & Leroy is a good friend.

JOE ROBY

Say Joe, when you're in Miami for the rematch in  
November, you've got to stop by & see my collection.  
I've got several large equestrian European paintings,

a colorful Matisse, pop art originals like Peter Max, Warhol & Lichtenstein & my newest acquisition, a sweet little Monet watercolor.

WOODY

It's an awesome collection Joe & he's got this beautiful, vintage pool table in the center of his gallery. But be careful if he challenges you to a game, cause eventually, he'll end up taking all your money.

JOE NAMATH

We'll have see about who needs to be careful when it comes to pool, but count me in Joe, I would love to see your collection.

LAURA (a nod at Valentina)

I didn't know you had such a great appreciation of art.

JOE ROBY

Oh, yeah Laura, I absolutely love it!

LAURA (conspiratorial)

What if I told you I know of a discreet collector who might be looking to sell his sofa size, original oil painting by Frederic Remington.

JOE ROBY

Go on!

LAURA

The painting, portrays a rider on horseback chasing down a runaway herd of cattle during a rainstorm & the colors, are just, ridiculously beautiful!

JOE ROBY

A sofa size Remington, definitely!

LAURA

Although, I'm pretty sure it has a rather dubious, maybe even a criminal, lineage?

JOE ROBY

Half my collection is from questionable owners & dealers.

LAURA

So Joe (Namath), how about you?

JOE NAMATH

I would love to see it as well, Laura, although I'm pretty sure Mr. Roby here, has much deeper pockets than mine.

LAURA (a wink to Valentina)

Okay, just throwing it out there for now. I'll keep you all updated as I get more information.

VALENTINA

I got a look at it as well guys. The cool blues & greens in Remington's rainstorm, would really look

nice here in your beautiful apartment!

JOE NAMATH

Thank you, Valentina.

VALENTINA

It's just so dang cozy & comfortable in here, not unlike your fur coat, which I could easily see myself getting lost in. (pulling the big coat up & around her)

JOE (pouring the last of champagne)

Wear it out tonight! It looks way better on you than me any day.

VALENTINA

Not so sure about that, but if you're going to insist! (closing the coat up over her eyes)

JOE

I insist! And you know what would make a really interesting & sexy painting?

VALENTINA (peek a boo)

What?

JOE

You centered on the couch here with a drink? Toasting! Draped in my fur coat with Nieman's, Superbowl victory painting as the backdrop.

VALENTINA

Let's get a photo!

LAURA

Yes! Val & I have new friend who paints from photographs & is extremely talented.

JOE ROBY (laughing)

I love the idea! Mark me down for a print!

WOODY

Or two!

JOE NAMATH

Let me grab my camera & I'll take a few photos now, cause we have reservations in half a hour at Delmonico's for steaks & drinks & since we lost, Woody & I are treating.

JOE ROBY

We got a little lucky today, but no matter what the outcome when you come to Miami for the rematch. You & Woody select a couple friends or cheerleaders & I'll treat everyone to a night on the town!

JOE (from across the room)

Fair enough Joe. Hey & after dinner, I know the owner of a little Jazz club up in Harlem where Miles Davis is headlining & I was thinking you ladies could probably jump in for a song or two.

VALENTINA (all smiles)  
Jamming with Miles?

LAURA & VALENTINA  
Sub us in Joe!

Everyone stands, all wobbly legged, except VALENTINA who scoots over to the center of the couch.

18

**EXT.** LIGHT BREEZE, SUNNY & HOT, CIRCLING HIGH OVER THE TRACK.  
AFTERNOON AT THE RACES, GULFSTREAM RACE TRACK, HALLANDALE, FL

**Graphic-** ~ Gulfstream Park Race Track, Hallandale, Florida ~

**NOTE-** See YouTube, 'Belmont Stakes 2017 the field'. Race contenders & previous winners, highlights, play over 'The low spark of high heeled boys' by Traffic, for inspiration.

Picking up the 11<sup>th</sup> from well outside the rail before they turn for home with the call, four across at the top of the stretch.

Traffic's, 'The low spark of high heeled boys', featuring LAURA, VALENTINA & MILES DAVIS, begins & plays over the entire length of scene with extended improvisational play.

At the end of the 11<sup>th</sup>, we settle over to finish line, sectional box seats, VALENTINA DEGAS, conversing with a GIOVANNI CAPUTO. A Giovanni minion, ANGELO REYES sits attentive to Giovanni's left. The three with sunglasses, smoking cigars.

GIOVANNI (tossing a losing ticket)  
So tell me more about New York. Performing with Miles. Rocking Traffic's, 'The low spark of the high heeled boys', before the big bar fight.

VALENTINA  
Oh, it was so much fun & we were all so stoned!  
It all began simple enough, Miles on piano, myself on bass guitar, pinging back & fourth that iconic tribal groove. Then abruptly, the drummer & Miles started adding all these complicated rifts & layers which at that point, I was just keeping time & doing my best to stay out of their way.

GIOVANNI (Italian, New York accent)  
Hey, someone has to keep it honest.

VALENTINA  
Actually, it was the sax player who finally wandered in & tighten everything up before Laura starts in with these bluesy, soulful vocals, adding & making up more than a few versus along the way.

GIOVANNI  
I miss her at the restaurant.

VALENTINA

It was all, so surreal. The whole place, bouncing & grooving along to the music.

GIOVANNI

It sounds like quite the scene. And by the way, that cut is going to leave a serious scar.

VALENTINA gently rubbing at a long row of stitches along the inside of one muscled forearm.

VALENTINA

This is nothing. You should have seen the three guys that Joe & I put in the hospital.

GIOVANNI

You know I grew up in New York. Morningside Park, 115<sup>th</sup> street, wait, wait, here we go Valentina, Angelo.

This is the horse that I was telling you about. . . Mr. Jitters, the number six horse. (binoculars up)

GIOVANNI, Italian, 55ish, weathered tan, scar above one eye, straw fedora hat, un-tucked silk shirt, dress slacks, gold chain necklace, Rolex watch & a goose head walking cane.

ANGELO, Italian, 30ish. A Giovanni minion, angular muscle thin, acne scarred, slick backed hair, similarly, discounted dressed like Giovanni, his binoculars up as well.

VALENTINA, a simple, belted, flower pattern, cotton sundress, wedge heel sling back sandals, a brimmed straw hat, her long, thick hair, barrette to one side, plays in the light breeze.

GIVOANNI

Looks to be a little lathered. Maybe this big afternoon crowd has him a little excited.

Passing his binoculars to VALENTINA, removing her sunglasses.

See how the jockey, Arroyo, has the brim of his cap tipped down. That means the fix, is still on!

VALENTINA

Oh, okay, sure. Well, he certainly looks alert & spirited. All legs & backside, but definitely sweaty, not unlike our friend, Angelo here. (Angelo frowns)

GIOVANNI (chuckles)

I hope he's a little faster than our Angelo? I'm thinking of betting a grand or two on him to win. (POV big board, holding at nineteen to one)

VALENTINA

How sure is this sure thing?

GIOVANNI (looking around, as if searching for someone for confirmation)  
The fix is only on with Arroyo & the two favorites, the two & the four horse.



VALENTINA, sitting in on the 2 & the 4 horses before returning the binoculars to GIOVANNI.

And I'm not even sure how many people are in on this little proposition? Damn, he just dropped from nineteen to twelve to one?

V.O. PA ANNOUNCER  
13 minutes to post to the twelfth race.

VALENTINA  
So what do you think about my little business proposition. Fronting Laura & I the hundred thousand with a ten percent vig, with the Remington painting as collateral for a cocaine run to South America.

GIOVANNI  
It's sounds good, but I don't know? Maybe you should put up Laura's boat as well?

VALENTINA  
The reward on the Remington alone is nearly that much.

GIOVANNI  
Maybe?

VALENTINA  
And a ridiculous discount on any purchases & our continued partnership on all future flights, if you can just front us the buy money for this first run.

GIOVANNI  
I think your discount price is still a little high, considering I'm fronting the whole operation?

VALENTINA  
Cocaine is going for nearly twenty thousand a kilo in New York & Chicago. I also know those Columbians out in the Atlantic are selling it off their trawlers for at least eight or nine.

GIOVANNI (re-fixes his binoculars on Arroyo)  
Closer to ten & going up every day, but let's see how the race goes as I'm currently a little low on available cash. Especially ever since the cops busted up & shut down my strip club.

GIOVANNI conspicuously, feathers out & folds two grand in hundreds, the last of his cash from his money clip.

VALENTINA (drains her drink empty)  
Hey, let me place the bets this time.  
I'm feeling lucky!

GIOVANNI peeks VALENTINA, sighs & turns to ANGELO.

GIOVANNI (to Angelo)

Give me two grand on the Six to win. And keep your eye on Arroyo. Right up to the start of the race.

ANGELO

Okay boss.

GIOVANNI (tapping his cane)

Go on now, before we get shut out!

VALENTINA

Come on Pokey, you lead the way!

Cigars in tow, the two head up the isle. A couple young voyeurs along the walkway vibe & whistle on VALENTINA's sultry walk before they quickly disappear at the top of the walkway.

**INT.** BELOW THE GRANDSTAND, NO BREEZE HOT & SMOKEY. OUR COVER SONG TEMPORARY MUTED, REPLACED WITH BETTING CHATTER AT THE WINDOWS.

V.O. PA ANNOUCER

The horses for the twelfth race are now beginning to load into the starting gate.

Last & next in line at the betting window, ANGELO, anxious, standing parallel to VALENTINA, she closely watching the monitor.

V.O. PA ANNOUNCER

Ambiguous Brenda, who had a little trouble getting into the gate in her last race, goes in with out any problems.

Reaching the window, Angelo shoulders VALENTINA aside, then slow counts GIOVANNI'S wager first, then his own bet, no faster with mixed crumpled bills, \$687 dollars on Mr. Jitters to win.

Papa's got Gin is next to load into the gate.

As ANGELO is placing his win bets, we look back to the monitors.

And now we're waiting on Mr. Jitters to finish the line.

Approaching the gate, Mr. Jitters stops & starts backing up, snorting & shaking his head. The big track assistant turns him & begins to circle him around again for another attempt.

**Cut to:** Angelo receives his win tickets. Slow turns from the window & intentionally bumps into to LAURA.

ANGELO (smiling)

Better hurry, pokey.

ANGELO uninformed about the troubles at the gate, self-absorbed, double-checking his win tickets, exiting away.

LAURA informed, watching the monitor as Mr. Jitters is brought up to the gate again. He starts bucking, kicking his track assistant aside and nearly throwing his jockey. ARROYO re-gathers himself again in the irons & tries to steady the leggy colt, then tips the brim of his cap up with a glance over at his co-conspirators.

VALENTINA (smirks & places her bet)  
Give me a two hundred dollar Quinella, numbers  
two & four, See my Heels & Lost in Memphis.

**EXT.** Mr. Jitters finally goes into the gate with a double arm bar across his backside by two wider than tall track assistants as the Traffic cover continues, building towards its crescendo, the crowd buzzing with excitement!

V.O. PA ANNOUCER  
And they're all in the gate. .. (bell rings)

And they're off in the twelfth . . .

It's the co-favorites; See my Heels & Lost in Memphis, quickly moving out in front, showing early speed, intent on the lead.

GIAVONNI standing, braced by his cane, de-binoculars & looks back to see ANGLEO coming down the isle, all smiles, waving tickets.

Between horses, tucking in nicely behind the leaders, it's the number 3 horse, Give me a little Room. Then racing three across, A Boy named Sue, The One we Kept and Papa's got Gin. Then it's a length & one half back to I'm Running Late & saving distance, running on along the rail, I Know a Shortcut, then it's the filly, Ambiguous Brenda, followed by the grey, I like to Smoke & two back to the trailer, the number 6 horse, Mr. Jitters.

The opening quarter mile is up at a very respectable 23.74 as the field of eleven head on to the back stretch.

So it's still the front running duo of See my Heels & Lost in Memphis, a half length back, in between horses, Give me a little Room, looking for racing room, then it's two back to A Boy Named Sue . . .

Out on the track, jockeys POV with the co-favorites, looking back at, Give me a little Room, racing up between them; an acknowledged nod & they close the gap between them, causing their foe, Give me a little Room, to check up & drop back off the pace.

**19**

**EXT.** WE LEAVE OUR MOUNTS ON THE BACK STRETCH & MATCH CUT INTO CIGARETTE POWERBOAT OCEAN RACING AT THE 'ORANGE BOWL REGATTA'.

**Graphic-** Orange Bowl Ragatta, The 250-Mile Race Classic, Miami Marine Stadium, Miami, FL

Same day, late afternoon, boat drivers & helicopter aerial views.

V.O. TELEVISION ANNOUNCER  
Welcome back to sunny Miami where the sport of powerboat racing all began in 1956. The locals swear, they can still hear ole Sam Griffith's

number 88, rumbling across the Atlantic.

After a grueling 250 miles, it's all come down to these two teams, Walt Walters with team Candyman & the rookie sensation, Sandy Salazar & team Charisma.

Zoom in on NED & LAURA, binoculars up, among the capacity stadium crowd watching the leaders, side by side racing, 36-foot, V hull, Cigarette powerboats, flying down the back straight away.

**Note:** CGI venue as Miami Marine Stadium is nothing more than a graffiti filled, historical landmark today, currently looking for rehab funding.

V.O. TELEVISION ANNOUNCER

And they simultaneously turn for home! What a finish this is going to be.

Uh, oh, on the inside, Walters has gotten a little loose on the final turn. .. & now have themselves up & now into the portside bow of the rookie, Salazar.

Look out here!

Team Charisma has gotten themselves airborne & up they go, spinning up & right over the back of the Candyman!

'Pardon me rookie', say Walter's, leaving Salazar & team Charisma, upside down & dead in the water!

What a race! What a finish! But it's all over now! Walt Walters & the Aronow racing team of the Candyman will win the 1972' Orange Bowl Regatta in spectacular fashion to the delight of this appreciative crowd on this wild & fantastic day of racing here in Miami.

**INT.** POST RACE, MARINA GRAVEL PARKING LOT. LOOKING OUT FROM NED'S NEWLY RESTORED, 1969 CHEVELLE SS; BUTTERNUT YELLOW, BLACK RALLY STRIPES, 396 V8, SUPER SPORT MAG WHEELS, PARKED BACKED IN, WINDOWS DOWN. PREVIOUSLY SHOWN UNFINISHED, GARAGED AT HIS HOME.

NED rolling a fat doobie as a pickup truck towing a powerboat trailer, clambers by leaving a POV of two Cubans. Thin, 40ish, rough looking, smoking cigarettes in summer leisure suits; one lime-green, one banana-yellow. They're leaning up against the rear of a black, Ford Galaxie Custom 500. Same model as the Gator McClusky, moonshine hauler, from the 1972 film, White Lightning.

NED (lights the doobie)

Let's chill for a little while & let all this traffic clear out of here. It'll give you a chance to finish, updating your novel.

LAURA (smiles, passenger, busy writing)

Appreciate that.

NED (passing the smoke)

Hey Laura? Check out the two stiffs, staring us down, in the rainbow suits across the way.

LAURA  
Palm Beach County plates.

NED  
With a Dick Nixon for pres bumper sticker?

LAURA  
They kind of remind me of those Cuban exiles who  
burglarized the Watergate Hotel?

NED  
Check out their car. Ford Galaxie, Custom 500.  
Same model as the White Lightning, Burt Reynolds's  
car from the drive-in movie last night.

LAURA  
The Gator McClusky's, moonshine hauler?

NED leans his head out the window, for a better viewing angle.

NED (hard top, black)  
Actually, this one's even a little meaner & faster.  
1966 two door, 500 XL, fastback. Duel exhaust &  
probably has a 428 stuffed under the hood.

LAURA  
They look all, out of place here in there ice  
cream colored, leisure suits?

NED  
Look, here comes that white Impala around again.

**EXT.** Inside the Impala, windows down, three young Hispanics,  
mirror sunglasses. Slowing as it approaches before turning &  
parking two spaces down the line from the Galaxie.

LAURA  
Is this what I think it is?

NED  
I'll bet over half of today's drivers are  
supplementing their race teams by running  
cocaine in from the Caribbean.

**INT.** LAURA  
I'm betting the suits are CIA trained, Cuban  
dissidents or refugees.

NED (smiling)  
Certainly makes for a better story.

LAURA  
Modern day, Nixon soldiers of fortune. ..

**EXT.** A wiry KID smoking a cigarette, the Cuban flag printed on  
his sleeveless tee shirt, exits the back seat of the Impala  
carrying a small duffle. Surveys the lot as he saunters over to  
the Galaxie with one eye on our Chevelle. After a little banter,  
the banana YELLOW SUIT, key opens their trunk.

**INT.** LAURA (passing the smoke back to NED)  
It's going down!

The KID bends over into the trunk, a handgun imprint displays above his waistband on the back of his tee shirt. He drops his duffel & comes out, with a much larger, heavier duffel.

LAURA  
The cash just shuffled its way over to the Suits.

NED  
And a lot, based on the size of that kid's duffel.

The conspirators nod their approvals as the Impala's trunk, auto opens across the way. The KID, quick hikes the big duffel back over to his car trunk & scrambles into the back seat as they're already backing up & motoring away.

LAURA  
I'm thinking we ought to follow the Suits until we find an open stretch of highway. Then for kicks, we bump & roll these two goofs into a ditch & take all their money?

NED (a long drag)  
Kind of like the boat race this afternoon?

LAURA  
Exactly like the race. Follow them all the way up to Palm Beach if necessary. A big score like this would certainly help finance our little run to South America.

NED  
Is this what you writers call, getting out & soaking up a little inspiration?

The SUITS step around & get in their car, the lime GREEN SUIT pauses & offers NED & LAURA the middle finger before getting into the driver's seat. The Galaxie's big engine roars to life before throttling down, idling, pulsating methodically.

Shifting into reverse, they back up to nearly the front of our Chevelle & then brake shift into first, kicking up gravel, pinging up against the front of our immaculately restored car, before casually, brazenly, motoring away on down the lot.

NED bites his lower lip, the fat joint pinched to the side of his mouth. Total silence before we hear the near simultaneous fastening click of seat belts, mimicking the start of the classic chase scene from the movie Bullitt.

NED starts up the Chevelle, its throaty engine roars to life before throttling down, pulsating, throbbing. The Association's, 'Along comes Mary', begins to play on the cassette deck. He shifts into gear & coolly, methodically, slow motors down the parking lot in the direction of the Galaxie.

**Cut ahead:**

**EXT. & INT.** A rural, open stretch on highway A1A, the Chevelle following, leap frogging, keeping a two car visual on their prey. LAURA picking through a file box of Maxell cassette tapes, singing the lyrics of a cassette that she is hunting for.

LAURA

Don't you see no matter what you do.  
You'll never run away from you.  
If you keep on running, you'll have to pay the price.

Selects & inserts Paul Revere & the Raiders, 'Kicks'.

NED

As soon as this on coming traffic clears,  
I'm thinking this might be as good of stretch  
of open highway as any to make our move.

LAURA

Cool. Let's do it.

NED

By the way, there's a Colt 45, loaded &  
holstered under your seat.

LAURA

Good to know.

Suddenly, the Galaxie takes off. With the oncoming traffic, NED quickly gives up a big lead. Finally, the oncoming traffic clears & he is able to pass in & around the cars in front of him, shifting gears, leaning hard on the accelerator.

**NOTE-** Don't over edit the racing like modern, CGI movies. Keep it 1972 simple & cool, letting the cars, the sounds of the vintage big block engines & the music be the stars as these two cars alone, will attract millions of car enthusiasts to the theatres all by themselves.

After a stretch of racing at ridiculous speeds, passing in & around occasional traffic, the two cars come up to a rise in the highway with the Nova closing. Both cars catch air as they go over the rise, passing a warning sign, 'Stop Light Ahead'.

Past the rise in the distance, an intersection with the traffic light at green. It's an all out car race to the light.

A police cruiser rolls up behind the line of cross traffic at the intersection, coming in & out of view between a trees & signs.

LAURA

Look out, there's a police cruiser in the  
cross traffic!

NED (checking his rearview mirror)

Hum?

LAURA

At the intersection, in the cross traffic!  
STOOOOOOOPPPP!

The Chevelle is on top of the Galaxie before NED finally see's the police cruiser ahead. Breaking, tires screeching & smoking, they come right up to & stop at the front of the intersection.

The Galaxie is full speed ahead & late through the light, having changed from green to yellow to red!

The police cruiser hits its siren, lights flashing, wildly wheels around the traffic in front of him, turns north & embarks in pursuit of the Galaxie as the music, 'Kicks', comes to an end & we're left with just the sound of the Chevelle's engine, ticking & cooling & the already distant, fading police siren.

NED catches a glimpse of a Baskin-Robbins ice cream parlor at the intersection in his peripheral, Laura's side of the street.

NED (nodding over to the parlor)  
How about an ice cream cone? My treat.

LAURA (already looking over, smiling)  
You know as we were coming up to the light,  
I was secretly hoping, that you would give  
up the chase, stop & buy me a cone?

NED (smiling, his Burt Reynolds impersonation)  
That's funny, cause initially, that's why I  
thought you were asking me to stop!

LAURA  
Gator McClusky! You just simply know me all to well.

The stoplight turns green, they turn & drive over & park, looking out the front windshield into the front window of the parlor, NED continues with his Burt Reynolds impersonation.

NED  
Well, let's just see how well I know you?  
Let me think here, let me think?  
Triple scoop, that's for sure.

LAURA, holding back a smile.

Rocky Road, Strawberry & ah, French Vanilla?

LAURA  
Waffle or a sugar cone?

NED  
Hum, sugar? Yeah, definitely a sugar cone?

LAURA, holding back a big smile before laughing.

LAURA  
You win Gator!

NED (Burt Reynold's classic laugh)  
Ya hahahahaaaaaaa.



**EXT.** WINDY, TWILIGHT, ON THE FOOTBALL FIELD, BUSCH STADIUM, ST. LOUIS, MO.

**Graphic-** Miami Dolphins 34, St. Louis Cardinals 14

Post game among the players & media, LAURA & VALENTINA, heavy makeup, cheerleader uniforms, big wild hair tamed with team color bows & ties, gazing upwards beyond the stadium roofline at the Gateway to the West, the Arch, 630 feet tall. Atop, its vivid red light blinking, warning, helicopters & airplanes stay away!

VALENTINA

Who do we know that can get us up into Arch for an after hours, private tour tonight?

LAURA (the wind in her face)

Nope. No way, Val!

VALENTINA

Oh, it would be so much fun up there!

LAURA

You know how I'm deftly afraid of heights!

VALENTINA

I know this great little Mexican restaurant just across the street. We'll split a Quaalude & chase any fears you may have with a couple two or three, Gold Margaritas.

LAURA

Pretty sure, they shut it down when it's this windy out, anyway.

VALENTINA

Look! Over there! Is that Stan Musial?

LAURA

Who?

VALENTINA

Stan the Man. The handsome gentleman in the blue suit & red tie. He knows everybody & everything about this town. Come on!

**EXT.** NIGHT, WINDY, GATEWAY ARCH, SHADOW SIDE GROUND LEVEL WITH LAURA & VALENTINA, PLEADED SATIN COCKTAIL DRESSES & HIGH HEELS.

After checking her watch, VALENTINA delivers four distinct knocks on the metal utility door at the base of the Arch. Seconds later, two knocks are returned. She re-knocks two times & the door opens a half-foot, slowly, groaning a low-pitched yawn.

MAINTENANCE WORKER ROMEO

Is that you Juliet & Lauralie?

VALENTINA

Yes, we come as friends of the Man. You be thy Romeo?

ROMEO  
I am. Late night tour for two?

VALENTINA (giggling)  
That is indeed our wish.

ROMEO  
Compensation?

VALENTINA hand passes into the darkness, a short roll of four gold-foiled wrapped Quaaludes.

VALENTINA  
Quaaludes! Delights for you & your friends  
from the East?

**Cut to INT.** ROMEO, a distinguished older gentleman, pressed uniform, materializes out of a tunnel with LAURA & VALENTINA into muted blue & crimson lighting, inside the expansive below ground entrance lobby. There are two other workers, one busy with an industrial floor-cleaning machine as music plays from hidden stereo speakers.

VALENTINA (pausing, Zen overwhelmed)  
Romeo, Romeo, did ever a dragon keep so fair  
a retreat!

ROMEO  
Please, follow me fair ladies over to the elevator  
pods & let's get you on your way to the summit.

Break time, fellas.

ROMEO passes the baggie to one of his co-workers & leads the ladies over to a series of elevators & opens a side door to a control room. The three huddle in as he flips on a series of switches while providing instructions.

The two of you will journey in Pod number one.  
When you reach the summit, simply navigate by  
using the track lighting on the flooring out to  
& along the observation deck.

I will proclaim through the P.A. system when  
the tour is over, say after thirty minutes or so.  
At that time, eyes look your last & return promptly  
to your pod & buckle up for reentry. Questions?

VALENTINA stoned, starring at a rack of various cassette tapes.

VALENTINA  
Expedition music?

ROMEO  
What does my lady request?

VALENTINA  
Some sort of David Bowie, Space oddity or. ..

ROMEO (grinning)  
I know where exactly where you're going & say

no more. I've got a beautiful, Ziggy Stardust, magical Bowie space odyssey mix that I think the two of you will absolutely, marvel!

VALENTINA

Then I say no more. Shall we Lauralie?

Taking LAURA by the hand, they start to turn.

ROMEO (holding up an index finger)

Oh, ah, one more thing, Juliet, Lauralie?  
There's a circular staircase at the center of the observation deck that leads up through a portal to the top of the world.  
If you could do me & the fellas a favor & if adventure is what you truly seek. Could you stand side by side with the moon & the stars & replace the old warning light with a new bulb?

**Note:** see YouTube's, Gateway Arch annual bulb change, a frightening & thrilling reference video.

**NOTE-** Back up music idea, YouTube, 'Rocket Man (Elton John Cover)- Maynard], or a similar cover version.

**Cut to:** Inside the elevator pod, blue mood lighting, a stairwell visible through the porthole window. VALENTINA seated opposite LAURA, seat belted, awkwardly holding a giant light bulb.

After belting in herself, VALENTINA unveils a new fifth of Gold Tequila stuffed inside her shoulder bag & the remaining gold foil wrapped Quaaludes. Separates & breaks off half a pill & swallows it with a thirsty drink.

VALENTINA (Bowie impersonation)

Major Tom, you're not looking so well. Here, take the other half of your protein pill & let's get ready to launch.

VALENTINA reaches out with half pill in one hand & the bottle in her other. LAURA clumsily tugs her skirt back, places the bottom half of the big bulb between her thighs, freeing both hands as the musical montage begins. After taking her pill & passing the bottle back to VALENTINA, suddenly, the pod kicks into motion.

DAVID BOWIE TAPE

Ground control to Major Tom, Ground control to Major Tom, Take you protein pills and put your helmet on, Ground Control to Major Tom, 10, 9, 8, 7, 6 . . .

**NOTE-** A creative, musical montage of the best parts of Bowie's, Space Oddity, Ziggy Stardust & the crescendo with Life on Mars when VALENTINA attempts to replace the old light bulb.

LAURA grasps hold of the bottom of her pod chair; the bulb squeezed firmly between her thighs & closes her eyes. The scene turning surreal as the pod travels upward, bump clicking along at singular, even intervals.

**EXT. INT.** The pod slow tilts with the curvature of the arch intermixed with various outside, frightening & death defying angles & elevations up the length of the arch from flying drone cameras & eventually the pod does a trippy, full 360, then catches itself, rocks, settles & straightens up again, before bump clicking along to the apex.

**INT.** The pod door opens abruptly at the summit with LAURA lost in meditation, hair mussed, smiling, eyes still closed, hands still gripping the bottom of her chair, gently swaying to the music.

VALENTINA (hair mussed, unbuckling)  
What a long & strange trip that was, hey Major?

We've landed Tom, time to leave the capsule  
& start the tour.

LAURA  
No, you go on, I'm not moving!

VALENTINA (standing)  
I'll hold your hand.

LAURA  
No, really, you go on. I'm good right here,  
but first, do me one favor?

VALENTINA  
One favor?

LAURA (grinning, eyes still closed)  
Leave the bottle.

VALENTINA  
Okay, but if you change your mind, you know  
where to find me.

VALENTINA, with an extra tug, frees the bulb from LAURA's thighs, replacing it with the bottle of tequila & heads out, up the short stairway that leads to the viewing platform, checking her balance as she goes, the Arch swaying a little with the wind.

Reaching the center apex along the viewing platform, turns, steps up & leans out into one of the observation, window wells for a view of the city below. Leaning out too far, she loses her balance, spills forward, into the downward sloping well with a bang, unable to break her fall, her arms cradling the bulb pressed up along her waistline.

She takes a moment, her face pressed up against the glass, looking down at a dizzying view of the city below before clumsily gathering herself up & out, using one high-heeled shoe as leverage, perilously wedged up against the glass window.

**EXT.** An outside drone camera catches it all, looking back up at her through the window well with curiosity & a little sympathy.

**INT.** Back on her feet & on the move again, rubbing the top her forehead, navigates her way over to the circular ladder & begins the short ascent up to the portal.

**EXT.** Drone camera POV, parallel with the top of the arch. The blinking red warning light goes suddenly dark, replaced by the backside of VALENTINA, the wind tangled in her hair, her silhouette blinking a red ghostly glow against the night sky.

We faintly begin to hear a distant hum of a jet airliner over the Bowie music from inside the open portal. The drone camera, curious, flips up & over, looking directly behind itself, sees nothing but dark clouds racing across the night sky & distant stars all the way to the horizon.

The drone POV flips back up & over & we now see VALENTINA standing, barefoot, hunched over the top of the dome lid, the wind billowing up her dress around her as she contemplates the protective dome over the light bulb.

She locates a dead bolt along the side of the dome, slides it backwards & opens the lid & begins the task of unscrewing the old bulb. Her blinking silhouette eventually goes nighttime dark.

The hum of a jet airliner continues, getting louder & more distinct. We drone POV back up & over again, only this time we see an approaching jet airliner in the distance, closing, coming in & out of the clouds, directly towards us.

Alarmed, we POV back up & over & we see nothing but the shadowed Arch & the night!

**NOTE-** The city has recently added ground level spotlights, illuminating the arch at night. Obviously, those will be turned off for the film as there were none in 1972.

VALENTINA finally appears again in the shadows, climbing up from the portal with the replacement bulb. Standing, hunched over the dome opening, her dress billowing even more enthusiastically, the wind now gusting, slips & falls, awkwardly to a knee, to an elbow, then to her back along one side of the dome lid. Thankfully, she is able to keep the bulb from hitting & breaking against the arch, holding it high in the air like a wide receiver making good on a catch.

She gathers herself up to a sitting position only to see the approaching airliner. Alarmed, she's back up on her feet again & frantically, begins screwing in the replacement bulb. Frustrated, removes & examines the threading on the bulb followed by a quick peak at the approaching airliner before trying again.

The noise escalates to thunderous before finally success, the bulb begins blinking again. She closes & dead bolt's the dome lid as the surrounding steel panels illuminate bright with the reflective lights from the airliner. The noise now deafening, the wind furious, wrapping itself around VALENTINA as she drops to her knees, arms clenched, circled around the blinking dome, the plane directly overhead.

Looking upward, we follow the underbelly of the airliner as it zooms by & continue to follow it until it fades into the night, before slowly, panning back down to the top of the Arch. Now ghostly quiet, just the sound of the wind & the muted music from inside portal, still eerily open. The warning light, dutifully blinking, off & on, off & on.

We wonder curious over the open portal & the surrounding curvature of the Arch & even take a frightening peek, just over the edge, leaving us to muse, what happened to VALENTINA?

#### **INTERMISSION**

**Graphic-** 'Let's all go out to the lobby'

#### **PART II**

**21**

**EXT.** MORNING DAWN, YACHT CLUB MARINA, BISCAYNE BAY, FL. A BANNER READS, 'MIAMI'S 28<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BILL & SAIL FISHING TOURNAMENT'.

Binoculars POV, hotel top floor balcony suite. The morning dawn streaked with blues & pinks. The bay crowded with untethered, idling fishing boats & colorful crews. Out along the outermost dock, spectators & a megaphoned, official.

Behind the binoculars, government agent POLINA FONTAINE; bare feet propped against the middle balcony rail, navy windbreaker, short shorts, her face shadowed by a long brimmed, navy cap over the same brick red hair from the Caymans. A big bite from a breakfast, plated on a short circular table in front of her, before bringing into focus the contestants on the Cellar Door.

POLINA

The Cellar Door is just, center left with a crew of three in coral green, long sleeve tee shirts.

Pan over to agent NATASHA BASTIANELLI, similarly seated & situated on the other side of the balcony, binoculars up.

NATASHA (munching a bacon strip)

I like the lyrical melody of that name.

POLINA

They say it was the name on the boat when she bought it, nobodies sure about it's origin as the original owners were swept off the bow during a torrential storm off the coast of Bermuda.

Piloting, LAURA, second tier helm, enjoying a breakfast pastry. At the stern, NED & VALENTINA with a bruise on the corner of her forehead, finishing up skip-bait ties; threading big mackerels to large eagle claw, circle hooks.

The three wearing, protection against the sun, long sleeve, 'Cellar Door' logo, anatomy fitting tee shirts, billed caps, sockless Converse canvas shoes. The girls all legs, one-piece black swimsuits under their shirts. NED, his usual cargo shorts.

Rack haltered behind the fish fighting chair, six substantial fishing rods, four dangling 20", big-eye Knucklehead lures

skirted in various colors of neon.

VALENTINA (admiring his threading)  
Nice, you're getting really good at this.

NED (being clever)  
Someone said big baits catch big fish.

VALENTINA (smiling)  
That's enough for now. Throw that tray in  
the ice box & I think were just about ready.

Rinsing their hands in the ocean over the side of the boat.

Hey, I've got some good news.

NED  
Me to, but you go first.

VALENTINA (conspiratorial)  
I think I've found a lender & a buyer for the  
cocaine run to South America.

NED  
A lender & a buyer?

VALENTINA  
Yeah, it's the same guy. Keep it simple. Bring  
it in with a big buy & then get the bulk of it  
out of our hands, quickly with a hefty profit.

NED  
Perfect, for I would hate for this to turn into  
some sort of vast, full time, criminal enterprise.

VALENTINA  
So have you heard back from your Nam buddy?

NED  
That's my news, he called me yesterday afternoon.

VALENTINA  
Okay, what did he have to say?

NED  
Said they met up with a guy who owns a vineyard &  
winery in Northern Chile, with an unlimited supply  
of cocaine. It's all shipped down by rail from the  
highlands in Bolivia & processed & refined into  
cocaine at his estate villa.

VALENTINA  
Sounds promising.

NED  
And the vineyard has several dirt & gravel roads  
where one can easily land a small plane.

VALENTINA

Even better.

NED

And best of all, the price is right!  
At least as of yesterday afternoon.

VALENTINA

How right?

NED

A thousand dollars a kilo, right.

VALENTINA

That's like stealing! We've got to make a run?

NED

We really do, don't we.

VALENTINA

And hey, when we catch the biggest fish today.  
Besides the free advertising for the business,  
that first place prize money would be another  
nice addition to the buy pool.

TOURNAMENT OFFICIAL (squawks his megaphone)

Fellow anglers, all of our sponsors & the beautiful  
people of Miami. Welcome again to our twenty-eighth  
annual, Bill & Sail Fishing Tournament! And now  
it's the time that we all have been waiting for.  
It's time to throttle up those engines!

LAURA (raising a fist, returned by Ned & Val)

Here we go guys, tally ho!

TOURNAMENT OFFICIAL

It's time to, Go FISH!

The official, gunfire's a flare far out into the morning dawn.  
**Cut to:** Hotel balcony, picturesque POV, the water in the bay  
boiling, crowd cheering as the parade of boats jet out to sea.

**22**

**EXT.** MID MORNING, SUNNY, BREEZY, SOMEWHERE SOUTHEAST OF KEY WEST.

Rolling with the swells, the trawler, Ido que el Viento, with its  
Columbian flag waving with the jet stream. The only sign of life  
on deck, a scruffy little dog that suddenly stops curious & looks  
out at an approaching, sleek, vintage wooden speedboat.

Piloting, ANGELO, from the horse races, along with his running  
mate BENNIE. Loose fitting khakis, colorful long sleeve silk  
shirts, billed caps, approaching the trawler from off the port  
side stern, throttling down.

ANGELO (the name in Spanish on the stern)

Gone with the wind, Ido que el Viento,  
in all her glory!

BENNIE



I still can't believe we're keeping the buy money for ourselves?

ANGELO  
Fuck Giovanni & fuck these Columbians!

BENNIE (surveying the empty horizon)  
I don't know Angelo, it's all, a little to. ..

ANGELO  
Come on Bennie, we've got to start looking out for ourselves. No more tomorrows. Today is our day! Here we go, here we go, just follow my lead.

Suddenly the stern is busy with three sun darkened Columbians in faded worn tee shirts, trousers & American ball caps. One with an AK47 strapped over his shoulder & across his backside. Nervous Spanish chatter preparing to be boarded as the little dog disappears inside the galley.

ANGELO (mixing Spanish & English)  
Hola amigos. We employees of Senor Giovanni Caputo. Si?

CREW CHIEF (mixing Spanish & English)  
Si, I recognize the skip. Senor meatballs & pasta Caputo & you must be his delivery bambinos?

ANGELO (throwing up a tie line)  
Si, we be his delivery bambinos.

A crewman wristlocks, pulls ANGELO, then BENNIE aboard along with his small duffle, exchanging suspicious pleasantries.

CREW CHIEF (looking to his crew, confirmation)  
We were expecting you yesterday? Senor Alejandro Perez, he no clarify day of rendezvous?

ANGELO  
Yesterday, Senor Perez? Maybe we get it wrong? No hay problembo. We all friends, yes?

CREW CHIEF (mocking Angelo to his crew)  
Maybe we get it all wrong, We all amigos, no hey problemba? . ..Okay, okay hombres.

ANGELO (holding up open, both hands)  
Okay, good. Well, we would like to change our order from three to say, ten kilos, por favor?

BENNIE, a puzzled look? The CHIEF shrugs & waves four fingers to a crewmember who ducks back into the galley.

CREW CHIEF  
Hombres, we have only four kilos left to sell before we set sail for home.

ANGELO (holding up four fingers)  
No more?

CREW CHIEF

No mas.

ANGLEO shrugs as the one crewman returns from the galley holding a stack of four kilos against his chest.

ANGELO (scratching his nose)  
Okay Bennie, I guess four it is.

BENNIE drops to a knee, begins to unzip his duffel as ANGELO reaches out to shake on the deal, then suddenly wraps both hands around the back of the CHIEF'S head, knocking his cap off, pulls downward & raises a knee, violently crushing the CHIEF'S nose back into his face with a sickening, crunch!

Quick shoves the CHIEF back into the MAN with the AK47, spilling them both back along the stern as BENNIE brings out & then fumbles a .45 caliber handgun. The MAN with the AK47 is nimble & quick, rolls & gathers himself up to a knee, swings his machine gun around & fires a deadly burst of gunfire into ANGELO.

BENNIE finally, gun in hand, side steps the falling ANGELO & fires two lethal shots into the AK47 MAN. Turns & deftly shoots the CREWMAN with the cocaine, chest high, just above his top stack of kilos. A plume of cocaine powders the air. Then blindly fires a single shot into the back of the head of the CHIEF, still down in agony trying to straighten out his busted nose.

For a moment all is quiet, BENNIE surveying the carnage, his gun at his side, his running mate dead, when suddenly an elderly Columbian in a COOK'S apron comes cursing out of the galley waving high overhead, a meat cleaver.

COOK (in Spanish)  
Morir madre folladoraaaaaaa!

The COOK hurls his cleaver, sticking BENNIE high on the left side of his chest as he simultaneously, fires a single shot to the face of the COOK, stopping him cold.

BENNIE, knocked backwards, down along the deck, his handgun skitters over the side & into the ocean. He slow gathers himself up, pulls out & drops the wicked clever. Scrunches up his silk shirt, applies pressure, both hands up to the gaping wound.

He stumble walks towards the speedboat, pausing momentarily above the kilos of cocaine, faint, his shirt soaked & dripping with blood, leaves them behind & continues on over to the edge.

Freeing one bloody hand, releases the tie line, steps over & tumbles awkwardly over the side & into the speedboat, the cushioned side seats, softening his fall.

Gathers himself up, seizes a white beach towel, presses it up to the wound before traversing to the helm & starting the boat, the keys still in the ignition. Standing, he shifts into gear, maneuvering, looking over the bow, motors around & away from the trawler. Then he begins to sway, side to side, eventually keeling over as the speedboat slowly & aimlessly throttles away.

**EXT.** NOON, SUNNY, COASTAL BREEZE, SOUTH MIAMI, GIOVANNI'S RESIDENCE. POOLSIDE AT THE DECK RAILING, INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY

POV looking over GIOVANNI's shoulder at the open stretch of the intracoastal waterway where it opens up to the Atlantic Ocean. An FM radio station, turned low, plays bluesy jazz as fishing & pleasure crafts slowly motor through the Intracoastal.

GIOVANNI, pressed dress shorts & stripe shirt, flip flops, Rolex Daytona watch, sunglasses, holding an iced tumbler of dark whisky, leaning against the cast iron railing supported by his cane above an 'empty boat slip' along the dock. After checking his watch, shoots two Dexedrine pills with a big drink.

Turning back towards his home, he notices a large Iguana moving slowly out from the shade along the side garden & watches it scamper across the whitewash concrete deck & run under a white, toweled recliner, seeking shade on his side of the pool.

Surveying the length of the recliner, ADRIANNA, 45ish, Italian, similar looking to Sophia Loren, natural full figure curves, lanky, tanned very dark, thick black stylized hair, a delicate gold bracelet & necklace, sunning on her back, oblivious to the lizard. She's wearing a shear, leopard print one piece swim suit; the 'V' where her legs meet is noticeably unshaven, bushy black against her dark tan.

GIOVANNI (amused)

My darling Adrianna, you appear to have  
Buckwheat caught in a headlock.

ADRIANNA opening her eyes, rising up on her elbows.

ADRIANNA (mixing Italian & English)

What are you querying, my dear Gio?

GIOVANNI

I think you got Buckwheat there, caught in a headlock.

Sitting up, she puts on big sunglasses & turns down the radio on the little circular table next to her chair, still puzzled, smiling, a sip from a tall iced drink?

One of the little rascals, the funny little black  
kid with the big afro.

GIOVANNI, holding his hands wide above his head with his drink glass in one hand.

I'm just being silly. I can tell you haven't  
shaved in a while?

ADRIANNA (giggling)

Oh, Buckwheat. Spanky & the Gang. Porky's little  
friend. You're so silly, my Gio!

GIOVANNI

I was trying to say, you're looking

very, au natural, this morning!

She sweeps her hair off her forehead, light unshaven hair visible under her arms as well.

ARIANNA

It's just a Mediterranean thing. Being body positive & natural, I having spent most of the summer holidaying along the Cote D'azur.

GIOVANNI

You also got a little Sophia Loren thing going on as well. She doesn't shave her under arms either & as far as the rest of her, I. ..

ARIANNA

Wait, first Buckwheat & now, suddenly, I remind you of the lovely Sophia. Let me guess, you're short on cash & you've got another one of your, just can't miss, investment opportunities?

GIOVANNI (leaning back on the rail)

Kind of, but really, I'm just happy you stopped by this morning & as soon as the fellas get back, we'll get lunch & go out & look at some properties. South Beach, Ocean Drive, the art deco district? Where ever you want to go.

ARIANNA

The fellas, Angelo & Bennie?

GIOVANNI

Yeah.

ARIANNA

What have you got them out doing for you today?

GIOVANNI (quick check of his watch)

I got them out on a big buy with one of those Columbian fishing trawlers out in the gulf stream . . . & they're late! It's noon already?

ARIANNA

This new friend of yours, Alejandro Perez, the one who specializes in fixing horse races. He set that up for you with the Columbians?

GIOVANNI

Yeah, why? I thought you liked him?

ARIANNA

Like & trust are two different things. Then you mix in with those two idiots, Angelo & Bennie. Oh my goodness, my darling Gio, that's no way to run a successful business!

ARIANNA disappointed, returns the radio volume, drops her sunglasses, rolls over on her stomach & nuzzles her face into the warmth of the white beach towel, the cool breeze, chilly across her back. GIOVANNI turns back to the waterway, the uppers mixing

with the alcohol in his brain.

GIOVANNI (to himself)  
That's the problem with my fucking business.  
I can't trust anyone anymore.

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**EXT.** CONTEST FISHING, LATE AFTERNOON. BREEZY, OMINOUS CLOUDS MOVING OVERHEAD, TROLLING ALONG WOODS WALL, SOUTHEAST OF KEY WEST. VALENTINA PILOTING. ALL SUNGLASSES UP & LONG BILLED CAPS.

LAURA  
Here we go Ned, another nice tuna.

LAURA leaning over the stern, starboard side, a wood handle gaff in hand, briefly admiring the catch thrashing about in the water. The big fish rolls over & is gaffed, brought aboard & we notice billfish marks, tears on its sides.

Look, here's another good sign. Billfish markings.

Detaching the 20" Knucklehead lure from it's mouth & checking the continued integrity of the leader.

NED  
Oh, sure. Look at that.

LAURA quickly drops the fish into the built in, iced box cooler, looking up at the cloud cover moving overhead.

LAURA  
Go ahead & get that line back out in the water.

NED casts the big lure straight out the back of boat.

NED (surveying the surroundings)  
So how deep it is out here along the continental shelf?

LAURA  
900 to 2000 feet, in some areas.

NED  
And what are we now? Ten miles or so, southeast of the Keys.

LAURA (checking her watch)  
Closer to fifteen, but we still got time, if we can hook on to something soon.

NED  
Look at all the fish, suddenly schooling along the surface here with this front moving through.

LAURA stretching, blindly moving over to the rack of rods.

LAURA  
A fishermen's paradise & we're right in the middle of it all . . .

Come on, any time now, let's get it on . . .  
Look, what have we got going over there?

Two marlin bills, thrashing out of the water, fighting over the port side, skip bait. The pin on the outrigger pops, releases, providing the prey momentary seconds to swallow the bait before the line goes taut again. LAURA already has the bowed rod out of the rack holder, line singing off the reel.

LAURA (sets the hook once, twice!)  
Clear all the lines Ned!  
We're on, we're on Val!

Calling back up to VALENTINA at the wheel before moving into fighting chair, holding on for dear life, hook strapping the big reel to each side of the chair as line continues singing away.

VALENTINA shifts the Cellar Door into reverse to save line, the ocean splashing up against & into the stern, before sharply turning the wheel broadside to the marlin & shifting forward to begin the chase, forcing the big fish to drag the big circle of line that's already forming out on the water.

Excitement & chatter between the crew. The big fish surfaces & shows itself, a trophy blue marlin with a series of dramatic jumps & tail walks. The iridescent blue stripes, hints of gold & the enormous pectoral fins are magnificent as drone cameras, flying out over the water, capture the action.

We continue running parallel & after a while, LAURA finally begins retrieving line, exercising traditional short pumps & winding.

Coming up late into VALENTINA'S peripheral, our Columbian trawler, rocking aimlessly in the direct center of the chase. Seeking acknowledgement, VALENTINA taps the foghorn.

The marlin shows itself again in the distance, several jumps as VALENTINA maneuvers the Cellar Door around & in front of the trawler when the line snaps & the chase is suddenly over!

From the helm, VALENTINA saw the carnage on board the trawler as they passed, shutting down the twin Mercury engines to a steady throttle, she turns & circles back around.

**Cut to:** Three faces, sunglasses & long brimmed caps, bobbing up & down, hands holding along the edge of the trawler's bow, looking over & disappearing again with each swell. After three views, they simultaneously chin themselves up & onto the deck. LAURA, line in hand ties on, before they circle walk the carnage.

LAURA  
Awe, this is bad.

NED seizes the AK-47, side checks the safety, rack checks for a loaded shell, when a clanging noise comes from inside the galley.

NED hand signals quiet, then signals the two women over to the galley door. They meet on each side of the shadowed entrance,

crouching, LAURA leaning in behind NED. Machine gun in hand, NED signals VALENTINA, I'm going in.

Staying low, side steps & takes one step forward into the shadows when suddenly, the little dog comes flying out of the galley, vaulting up into the air off a foot stool towards the top of NED's head, barking!

VALENTINA

Look out!

NED

What the hell!

Rolling backwards, NED trigger fires a short burst of gunfire. We see only gun smoke at first, then we hear the little dog barking, frantically, circling around behind the them. Thankfully, late recognition, NED firing just over the head of the little dog & into the roof of the galley.

LAURA

Oh look! It's just a little dog.

**INT.** Staying on point, NED ducks back inside the doorway & holds his position, letting his eyes adjust to the shadows.

NED

Keep an eye out for any surrounding boat traffic while I take a look around.

V.O. VALENTINA

Rodger that Ned.

**EXT.** VALENTINA circles, intermittingly checking the horizon. LAURA circling as well, playful with the excited little dog. VALENTINA looks down at the bloody meat cleaver & follows the blood trail over to the side of the trawler.

Looks like a drug buy that suddenly went awry. Thinking somebody went over the side here, after getting hit with that meat cleaver?

LAURA

The survivors, if any, must of left in hurry?

LAURA, examining the kilos of cocaine as VALENTINA meanders over & begins to pick at the stacks of cash inside the open duffle.

NED (coming out of the galley)

Not much to find inside the galley except for a big safe. Probably full of cash & cocaine, but it's bolted to the floor.

LAURA picking up the kilos of cocaine, pressing them against her chest, one bag leaking, the little dog playful, circling her.

LAURA

I got three kilos & one busted partial.

VALENTINA

Three stacks of twenty dollar bills, but only the

top three are actual bills.

VALENTINA carefully separating & pocketing the real bills.

NED (looking over at the cleaver)  
I bet we could hack the safe in the galley right  
out of the floor with that meat cleaver & take  
it with us.

LAURA looking down at the face down, pitched crooked, blood  
soaked face & body of Angelo in his long sleeve, silk shirt.

LAURA  
This is only one of the five, that's the wrong  
color & dress, to be one of the Columbians?

She starts to roll him over with her foot for a better look-see,  
before being distracted by VALENTINA.

VALENTINA (staring off at the horizon)  
We've got company!

VALENTINA sees a Cutter on the horizon & quickly scampers over &  
drops herself over the bow & onto the Cellar Door. Grabs the  
binoculars & climbs up to the top, 3rd level, tower tier.  
Leaning into the railing, catching her breath, looks through the  
glasses & sees the top three quarters of a Coast Guard Cutter.

VALENTINA (barking out)  
Time to go guys! It's a U.S. Coast Guard Cutter  
& it's headed our way!

The swells are getting bigger, the clouds darkening with deep  
cerulean blues as the weather continues to turn. NED already  
slipping over the side, the AK-47 strapped across his backside.  
LAURA right behind, hand-pitching each kilo to NED, then slipping  
over herself with the broken kilo pinned to her chest.

NED (dropping the gun off first)  
Dang, the tie line, Laura!

NED chin up's back up on to the bow & unties the line. The  
little dog barking, 'what about me', prancing & circling him.

LAURA  
Bring the dog, Ned. Please. ..  
Come on boy. You're going home with us.

NED hand-pitches the dog to LAURA & slips over the side, nearly  
falling into the water, wiping prints away with his fore sleeve  
as he pushes off. VALENTINA from the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier helm starts up the  
engines, throttles back away & around to the back of the trawler  
& motors away in the direct opposite POV of the oncoming Cutter.

**25**

**INT.** NEDS'S HOME, ART STUDIO.

Ocean green mood lighting mixed with brighter lighting around the  
work area. The room, busy with reference photos, unfinished



paintings, drawings, paints, books, turntable & stereo speakers. A tranquil, 'Harvest Jane' cover, plays on a tape.

NED, leaning back in his chair, relaxing with a doobie, admiring a 24" x 36", detailed pencil sketch over a white gessoed Masonite board, oil paint here & there of LAURA & VALENTINA in black one piece swim suits posing at the stern of the Cellar Door, holding up a giant marlin. The same size reference photograph, with trace pressmarks, taped to a Masonite board on the neighboring easel, mirrors the painting LESS the penciled in marlin.

A large book, folded open with a two page, picture of an Atlantic Blue Marlin, sits in front of the reference photo on the lower frame support. NED turns his painting on its side & begins to paint in additional details on the Atlantic Blue Marlin.

26

**EXT.** NIGHT CLUB & RESTAURANT SIGN, 'West of the Volga', 'Ladies Night, \$1.00 well drinks, Welcome Miami Dolphins Cheerleaders'.

**INT.** We slip past the line, doorman & into the club's interior. It's hopping, numerous Latinos, an eccentric dress code & a flashing strobe light accentuates a capacity filled dance floor.

A DJ works the dance floor standing in front of a large, reel-to-reel tape player. Premixed Cuban-Afro, Latin Salsa & Merengue with Pop Music, enhanced with long, lavish percussion runs. A pre-cursor to the Disco dance wave here in South Florida.

Club owner ALEXEEV, 35ish, Russian, tanned dark, jewelry, wide lapel suit, open silk shirt, hairy chest, picks up a bottle of Russian Vodka from the bar,  $\frac{3}{4}$  circles the action in room before entering a back room office, closing the door behind him.

Inside the office, YEVGENI, his younger brother, thinner & not as tanned, similarly dressed, no jewelry. The percussion runs, muted, reverberate through the office walls.

ALEXEEV (brothers, Russian w/broken English)  
This colorful new DJ of ours has the a  
place jumping & hopping again tonight!

Seizes a couple glass tumblers off the countertop & pours two substantial, vodka shooters.

YEVGENI  
It's the way he's able to mix the Pop & Latin  
with those lengthy percussion runs that gets  
everybody up & a dancing.

ALEXEEV  
And a drinking! To your health, Yevgeni!

YEVGENI (not as enthusiastic)  
To your health, brother!

ALEXEEV  
So, we'll continue to give the liquor away for  
another week or two until we're the talk of the town.

Then we'll water the drinks & raise the prices.

YEVGENI

And we could even introduce an admission fee?

ALEXEEV

Like buying ticket in Kiev to see the circus.  
Well, I've got to run. Nadia is waiting downstairs  
with her car. If you want Yevgeni, you can take my  
convertible.

YEVGENI (sitting down at the office desk)

The Olds, sure Alexeev.

Remembering, ALEXEEV fishes out one of LAURA's business cards &  
sets it down in front of YEVGENI with his car keys.

ALEXEEV

Oh, one of the cheerleaders we met with.  
The big sexy blonde, a Miss?

YEVGENI (reading the card)

Hemingway, Laura Hemingway.

ALEXEEV

Yes, Hemingway. She charters fishing trips down  
there out of South Lauderdale. Give her a call  
tomorrow & book us a trip for Monday. We'll  
bring the girls & have some fun on our day off.

YEVGENI

And I'll thank her for coming in tonight &  
choosing our club to celebrate!

ALEXEEV (heading for the door)

Yes, V.I.P. welcome them back anytime. It's  
absolutely crazy out there!

We follow ALEXEEV out to the dance floor where LAURA, VALENTINA &  
her fellow cheerleaders, all dressed glitter & mod glam, lead a  
wild & sexy dance mix of Rumba, Merengue with a few early disco  
moves to the cheers & hoots of the patrons.

**27**

**EXT.** EARLY AFTERNOON, SUNNY & HOT. CHARTER FISHING WITH THE  
BROTHERS & THEIR RUSSIAN GIRLFRIENDS.

The nightclub music continues as a drone camera skims the surface  
of the ocean following well behind the Cellar Door like a marlin  
stalking its prey, picking up & tracking one of the dizzying skip  
baits towed by one of the outriggers. We continue on past the  
skip bait & up the line to the charter passengers.

The girlfriends, coastal tanned, lanky, natural full figures,  
swimmers fit, similar in size & shape to VALENTINA & LAURA.  
Visual cinematic symmetry.

The brothers fit, although the older & darker tanned ALEXEEVE, a  
little heavier around the waistline than the fairer YEVGENI.

The Russians wear an assortment of fun, mismatched, colorful swim & beachwear. LAURA & VALENTINA, their usual lightweight cotton, anatomy fitting, long sleeve tee shirts over one-piece black swimsuits. Everyone has sunglasses & long brim caps.

ALEXEEVE & girlfriend NADIA, share the second tier tower, piloting the boat fun with VALENTINA. YEVGENI sits in the fish fighter chair with girlfriend KATARINA parked on his lap.

LAURA, looking into the icebox built into the stern where several large fish are already on ice, shuts the lid, turns, look checks that the two outriggers are set & turns to YEVGENI & KATARINA as the nightclub, dance music ends.

LAURA

What do you say we head into the galley for some refreshments & a little break. Get out of the sun for a little while.

KATARINA (sexy accent, substitutes Russian with broken English like Yevgeni)  
Sounds like a good idea as I don't think Yev has anything left in the tank, say we were to hook into a trophy marlin or sail.

YEVGENI (little sunburned)

That's cause that big barracuda had me tied up for what seemed like hour.

KATARINA (jesting, heading into the galley)  
Thankfully, I was available to reel in that last hundred meters of line or it would still be out there swimming around.

**INT.** Inside the galley, the door stays open, LAURA turns on the radio, low volume FM station as YEVGENI & KATARINA relax around the dining table where holes are cut out as drink holders.

YEVGENI

I only tagged you in to share in some of the fun!

KATARINA

And here I thought it was because you were afraid of it's big, razor like teeth.

KATERINA nuzzling his cheek, showing her teeth while LAURA ices tall cups, pouring premixed Sangria & fruit from the fridge.

YEVGENI

Well, yeah, that to! (surmising at a big scratch on the back of his hand)

LAURA (serving drinks)

You all are doing a really fantastic job out there as we already have quite a few fish in the cooler.

KATARINA

Thank you, Laurie.

YEVGENI removing his cap, holding his iced drink to his forehead.

LAURA (leaning back against the cabinets)  
It's really warmed up this afternoon, so much hotter than yesterday. I still have plenty of that stew left over if either one of you are hungry again? Yev, take just a minute or two to heat up?

YEVGENI  
No, I'm good.

LAURA  
You okay there?

YEVGENI  
Tired is all. I have a lot of trouble winding down after work & getting to sleep at night.

YEVGENI reaching back into his travel pouch, withdrawing a bottle of black Dexedrine pills & a sandwich baggie, inside three fingers of cocaine & a rolled up dollar bill.

LAURA  
Oh?

YEVGENI  
The dance music from the club, just never stops playing in my head.

KATARINA  
Yev opens for lunch & closes the club at night. Thankfully they're closed on Mondays or I would never see him.

LAURA  
Why don't you split who opens & closes with your brother?

YEVGENI (sighing, cursing in Russian)  
He's always got something going on or claims, he's to fucking, busy.

Pops two pills & chases them with a long pull from his drink.

LAURA  
Doesn't sound like much of a partnership?

YEVGENI  
I'm really more his employee than his partner as it was his money that got us the club, plus I'm the only one he trusts to make the cash deposits at night & open & run the place for lunch during the day.

KATARINA  
Yev's more like his brother's, always available, dutiful & obedient lap dog.

YEVGENI  
I'm look soon, to ah, re A negotiate the partnership. Could you grab me a plate there?

KATARINA (conspiratorial)  
Actually, on way over we wondering what would happen  
if Alexeeve were to accidentally fall overboard &  
say a big shark, you know, were to get ahold of. ..

LAURA (handing a plate to Yevgeni)  
What?

YEVGENI (frowning)  
Sshh, no, we not say that. Katarina, she  
make funny jokes. She's a big kidder.

KATARINA  
Who's big kidder?

YEVGENI (already cutting out lines)  
Katarina is a big kidder. .. So anyway, mind if  
we take a break here & do a line or two?

LAURA  
Hum, sure, go ahead. You're my guests.

YEVGENI  
And a line for the Captain?

LAURA (joining them at the table)  
Hey, why not a line for the Captain.

YEVGENI  
And how about the big kidder?

KATARINA  
Please!

YEVGENI (directed at Laura)  
Don't ever tell Alexeeve, what we're doing down  
here. He thinking, I have big cocaine problems.

LAURA  
I can keep a secret.

YEVGENI cuts out three generous lines on the plate. They pass the  
plate around, YEVGENI vacuuming away the largest of the lines  
first, splitting it up between each nostril.

YEVGENI  
Ooooooooooh yeaaaaaaav! (and after a 2<sup>nd</sup> snort)  
Me loooooooooove the cocainah!

LAURA  
You know Yev, Katarina, as long as were keeping  
secrets. I just happen to know someone who can  
get you a pretty good price on a ½ or say even  
an entire kilo of pure cocaine.  
And maybe even quite a bit more, sometime down  
the line, if either one of you might happen to  
be interested in buying in volume?

YEVGENI & KATARINA all smiles, YEVGENI stashing his drug

paraphernalia back into his travel pouch, suddenly alive & reinvigorated, the Dexedrine speed mixing with the cocaine!

YEVGENI (pinching at his nose)  
We, a much very interested!

KATERINA  
Yes, a very much!

YEVGENI  
As long as it's pure. This is the last of my stash & I'm really in need of a new contact as what's currently circulating around the club has been stepped on so many times, I'm afraid to go anywhere near. ..

A smart snap & pop from one of the outrigger lines! A rod begins to buck & bang at one end of the rack holder, just behind the fish fighting chair as line sings off the reel.

Ziiiiiiiiinnnnnnngggggggg.

VALENTINA (shouting down from the helm)  
Fish on, starboard rigor, Yevgeni, Katarina! . .  
It's a nice sailfish!

**EXT.** ALEXEEV & NADIA hesitate at first before scooting down the ladder to the stern, but the trio inside the cabin break first for the poles. YEVGENI, first to the fish-fighting chair as LAURA grabs hold of the bucking rod, sets the hook twice, a third time & passes the rod to YEVGENI & straps click the reel to the chair!

Excitement, the fight is on as the galley music escalates in volume. High theater as a big Sailfish breaks the surface in the distance, several aerobatic jumps with drone cameras POVs!

Scene ends with KATARINA giving ALEXEEV a surreptitious look, her hand pressed against his back, he standing just to her outside, watching, leaning out along the starboard edge of the stern.

**28**

**INT.** UPSCALE BEDROOM, NUMEROUS COATS ON THE BED, NIGHT STAND LAMP LIGHTING. POST FOOTBALL GAME PARTY, JOHNNY UNITAS'S HOME.

**Graphic-** Miami Fish 16, Baltimore Colts 0

VALENTINA, short pleaded satin party dress, sitting on the bed, legs crossed, a telephone to her ear, chopping a line of cocaine on the polished finish of the nightstand with a credit card. Bedroom door closed, background muted music & chatter, like a party going on in the adjoining living room. She stops chopping.

VALENTINA  
Okay! So your guy authenticates the Remington. ..  
We have a deal? .. Estupendo! Yes, everything  
is a 100 per cent a go with the pilot. .. Cash  
exchange at the docks, Thursday at midnight. ..  
as long as we take that little problem of yours  
out to sea & dump it overboard. ..

Yes, I know what happens if. .. I got it already!

VALENTINA hangs up, returns to chopping, to herself in Spanish.

Yeah & you fuck with me & I'll be taking your  
dumb ass out to sea, you Mafioso, ego . . .

The bedroom door suddenly opens & a party guest looks in.  
VALENTINA lifts the receiver back up to her ear, like go away,  
can't you see I'm in the middle of a . . .

MARVIN GAYE (slipping out of his coat)  
Oh, I'm sorry, I was told I could lose my coat here?

VALENTINA (recognition, re-cradles the phone)  
Ah, no, no, come in. Come in.  
I was just using the phone. .. Are you Marvin?

MARVIN GAYE  
Yes & you must be our host, Sandra. Johnny Unitas's  
wife?

VALENTINA (being silly)  
No, actually, I'm, ah, Don Shula's wife.

MARVIN  
Shula! Some guys just seem to have all the good fortune.

VALENTINA (giggling)  
Yeah, he's a pretty lucky guy?  
No, I'm kidding. I'm Valentina, Miss, Valentina Degas!  
I'm one of the cheerleaders for the Fish. Throw your  
coat anywhere, Mr. Gay.

MARVIN  
Thanks & hi there, Miss, Valentina Degas.

VALENTINA  
I'm celebrating! Join me & I'll cut you out a line.

The door clicks closed.

**Cut to:** We meander, a capacious kitchen, looking in, eye tasting  
the cuisine, then follow appetizers in tow through the formal  
dining room & out to a very sizable living room where there's a  
painting of Johnny Unitas, hanging on the wall.

Mod party scene, muted lighting, players in sport coats, sexy  
women in cocktail dresses, smokes, cigars, drinks, dancing. Like  
a scene out of the old TV show, Playboy after Dark. Al Green's,  
'Love and happiness', plays next on the turntable.

We catch up with MARVIN GAYE, centered between VALENTINA & LAURA  
on a full couch next to a busy coffee table. MARVIN singing along  
to the music, his best Al Green impersonation. Cheered on, he  
stands, the coffee table group & eventually everyone at the party  
begins echoing the chorus back to him, 'Love and Happiness'. A  
hip, sexy & very cool, sing along!

**EXT.** COOL & BREEZY, EVENING TWILIGHT, AERIAL DRONE POV OF AN INTRACOASTAL BOAT MARINA, BEFORE CROSSING OVER HWY A1A TO LAURA HEMINGWAY'S HOME. HALF THE ROOF HAS THE NEW METALIC SHINGLES.

**INT.** A 1972 WHITE CADILLAC DEVILLE, V-8, 4 DOORS, WINDOWS DOWN, SEARCHING FOR PARKING ALONG THE FRONTAGE ROAD IN FRONT OF HEMINGWAY'S HOME. 'LOVE & HAPPINESS' PLAYS ON THE CAR RADIO.

Driving & in back, summer sport coats, one plaid, one stripes, Miami's dynamic duo; running backs JIM KIICK & LARRY CSONKA with their leggy dates, short party dresses, VERONICA & BETTY. The four sharing a ganja doobie.

Tike torches line the driveway. A banner across the porch reads, 'MIAMI DOLPHINS, 14-0, CELEBRATION PARTY'.

LARRY CZONKA

Perfect timing!

A car vacates a spot right in front of Hemingway's home. JIM parks, facing the house & turns off the engine & radio. The group sits a minute, sharing the last of the doobie, musing over the scene as the radio is replaced with live music coming from the back of the house. 'Stoned Cold Picnic' by Laura Nyro.

JIM (handle bar mustache, side burns)

Nice place, hey Czonk?

LARRY (mustache, misshapen nose, side burns)

And right on the water, Jimmy!

Did you know Laura & Valentina charter fishing trips?

JIM

Yeah, Laura told me she purchased a 44-foot, Sport Fisherman Commander, back in February of this year.

LARRY (looking back over his shoulder)

Pretty sure it's docked back at that marina, across the way, back there on the other side of A1A.

JIM

She keeps asking me to gather up some of the guys & charter an outing.

LARRY

What do you say girls, a little boating & fishing?

**EXT.** Ashtraying out the last of the smoke, exiting the car.

Veronica

Sounds like fun!

BETTY

Count me in!

They 'Surry On' up the driveway to Nyro's, Stone Cold Picnic.

JIM

I think that's Laura's new pickup here in the driveway?



LARRY

Ford F-250, Highboy. (color, wind blue)

BETTY

390 V-8, 4 wheel drive. (stares from the guys)  
What, I got my eye on one for Christmas and I  
love this color if you're taking notes Larry.

LARRY

Nix on the diamond ring I guess? Replace with  
one, shiny new, blue highboy.

BETTY (a big squeeze on Larry)

Awe, Larry! I would be happy with either or  
you could just surprise me with both?

VERONICA

Laura seems pretty successful, what'd she do  
before she started chartering fishing trips?

JIM

I know she used to wait tables with Valentina  
at that nice Italian restaurant, Giovanni's.  
And before that, I think she was a stripper  
& maybe sang in a rock band?

LARRY

I'd heard Laura or maybe it was Laura & Valentina  
were suspects in a bank robbery?

JIM

I heard that to, although I heard they knocked  
over a Brinks truck?

LARRY (laughing, a knock, knock on the truck)

Maybe both, who knows?

JIM

The only thing I do know for sure Veronica, is  
that Joe Roby, the team owner is absolutely  
infatuated with the two of them.

VERONICA

A couple seductresses who like to fish,  
rock & roll & occasionally strip.

BETTY

Don't forget cheerleading & robbing banks?

VERONICA (Jim opens the front door)

I'm really looking forward to meeting these  
outlaws. What do you say, Betty?

BETTY

Lead the way Veronica!

**INT.** The four walk in & quickly get lost in the celebration as we  
navigate in & around a mix of players, coaches, cheerleaders &

dates. Drinks, cigars, food & mood lighting through out the kitchen, dining, living room; an open & spacious floor plan.

The curtains & sliding glass back door are wide open, revealing the pool deck, more lighted tike torches, swimming, barbequing, dancing & band members from Harvest Jane, singing & performing.

Turning back to the living room, we pick up the real JOE NAMATH. A surreal cameo appearance, JOE looking sharp in bellbottoms, a long sleeve silk shirt, large black-rimmed glasses & a drink. Prowling, he stops at one of the opposing couches in the living room where two sexy women sit, preparing to smoke a ganja doobie.

Above them, a large framed, color photo poster hangs, features a disheveled VALENTINA in a fur coat, cropped by Leroy Neiman's, Jets Superbowl victory painting. The poster is centered between two large, abstract paintings queried by NED in a previous scene.

Observant, JOE coolly leans in, lighter lights their rolled smoke.

VENUS

Thank you Mister.

JOE

My pleasure, but please, call me Joe.

VENUS

Okay, thank you Mister Joe. (giggling)

The framed poster momentarily distracts JOE. Curious, confusion, then admiration & an appreciative smile.

JOE

I'm sorry ladies, but everybody & everything, especially this poster print, looks so familiar? Almost, like I'm lost in some sort of dream. But anyway, I'm pretty sure we've never met?

VENUS (holding up a hand)

My name is Venus. And this is my good friend Nicki.

NICKI (scooching over)

Hi, Joe. Here, sit down. Come join us. Maybe you can help us settle an argument.

JOE (in tight between the two)

Sure, okay. Thanks.

NICKI (passing the smoke to Joe)

Who would you say Joe, is the handsomest gentleman here at the party this evening?

JOE (taking a long toke)

Well, that's tough? That's tough? Let's see here. I'm probably going to need some help. Do you either one of you happen to have a mirror? (a big smile)

NICKI (giggling, a hand on his knee)

Oh Mister Joe, I think it's possible, you still

might be dreaming?

**EXT.** We leave Joe to the ladies, circle navigate then slip our way out to the pool deck. Surrounded with tiki torches lighting the approaching twilight, dozens more guests, scattered all the way out to the beach, where there's a making of a small bonfire.

LAURA with VALENTINA on bass guitar; harmonizing vocals. NED on lead guitar with the band rocking, The Outsiders, 'Bend me, shape me, anyway you want me', as groovy men & women dance to the music. The deck framed at each end with coolers of iced beer & smoking, Weber grills, adding to the atmosphere. LAURA's little dog, busy, circling in & around the legs of the various guests.

Scene ends with a number of illegal fireworks going whoosh off the far edge of the concrete decking & into the evening sky.

**Cut to:** The night competing with embers burning from the beach bonfire, candle light table globes on the deck tables & the moonlight shimmering off the pool as the party has dramatically quieted down. The little dog, house security, asleep in front of the sliding glass door.

**INT.** Stepping inside, over the security, we're greeted with candles flickering in blues & greens, giving light to various paired couples as Dusty Springfield's, 'The Look of Love', or Leon Russell's, 'A Song for You', plays on the turntable.

We find LAURA, her blouse & skirt disheveled, pulling the equally disheveled, NED, pressed dress shorts & a stripe shirt, up off a recliner before escaping, barefoot, to her back bedroom.

The blankets get loosely pulled back & bunched along with several pillows. White cotton sheets & pillowcases do little to illuminate the room. NED sits at the side of the bed while LAURA fidgets in front of him, looking for her cigarette pack of ganja smokes on top of the vanity dresser. She finds the pack, shakes out a rolled doobie & looks for her lighter.

LAURA

Have you seen my. . .

NED spark lights her Tiffany lighter. LAURA turns, leans in eyeball close, briefly rolling the smoke in her mouth, lightly wetting the paper for a slow burn, her face visible in the glow of the flame before combustion. A short toke, the ganja burning bright, the lighter clicks closed & the room goes dark again.

Standing, LAURA another toke, then a long, dizzying drag before passing it over to NED, embers whoosh across in the darkness. He accepts, leans back, comfortably on his elbows, against the bunched pillows & takes a long, dizzying drag.

LAURA

I'm thinking, I want to take our relationship to another level. Some place really special.

NED

Where did you have in mind?

LAURA (coquettish)  
You're leaving morning after tomorrow for South America  
& I want to give you a reason to hurry back. To be  
careful & not do anything crazy or foolish.

NED  
It's going to be a long flight, but it's not  
like I'm shipping off to the war or anything.

NED briefly flicks the lighter on & off again, leaving a  
momentary flash of LAURA, unbuttoning her blouse from behind with  
a fractional, frontal view of her in the vanity dresser, mirror.

LAURA  
Well, what do we even know about our seller, this  
mysterious wine merchant & cocaine trafficker?

NED  
Not much I guess?

LAURA  
And what if your plane were to suddenly vanish in one  
of those freak storms, somewhere off in the Caribbean,  
out in the Devil's triangle, like Flight 19 & those  
Navy, torpedo bombers?

NED  
This will be my fourth flight over the Caribbean,  
so feeling comfortable about that part of the trip.  
It's the more than 700 miles of open ocean between  
Grand Cayman & Panama that keeps me more than a  
little awake at night.

NED flicks the lighter on & off, briefly again, a flash of LAURA  
still turned away, slipping out her skirt down to her bra &  
knickers.

LAURA  
That's a ridiculous amount of open water to  
cover if I have to organize a search party.  
I mean, I don't even think I have a good photograph  
of you, if I have to put up posters.

NED  
I can get you my high school, senior picture.  
It still bears a pretty close resemblance.

LAURA  
That's just for starters. I'm going to need a new  
rain slicker, preferably something fashionable to  
protect me against the stinging, tropical rains while  
sailing about blindly, looking up & down & around the  
various islands. I'm suspecting many, still uncharted  
& probably inhabited by headhunters & who knows what  
else.

NED flicks the lighter on & off again, LAURA turned, unfastening,  
removing her bra down to just her knickers.

NED

Well, on the plus side, the search would make for a nice chapter in your novel. And an admirable story at that, especially the part about headhunters for readings on your book signing tours.

Ned leans over & ashtray's out the smoke on the side table.

LAURA

Did you know women write diaries in hope that their words will somehow beckon fate?

NED flicks the spark wheel again, but this time, no spark, no flame, no light.

NED

Oh, you got to be kidding me!

Two more attempts, no spark.  
I don't believe it!

LAURA

Don't believe what?

NED

Your lighter? It runs out of flint just as the show was getting interesting!

LAURA

That's because fate caresses the few,  
but tragically Ned, torments the many.

Playful dark shadows & the sounds of ruffling pillows & sheets.

LAURA & NED

Giggles, screeches, ouches & kisses.

NED

So what are you trying to say, you want to go steady?

**30**

**INT.** (FORT) LAUDERDALE/HOLLYWOOD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, INSIDE THE PILOTS HUB.

**VOICE OVER-** NED reading from his flight agenda, outlined below \*\*

A PILOT reading the Sun Sentinel Newspaper, morning headline-  
**Cuba's, Soviet MiG-23s, Harassing Drug Traffickers,  
Planes & Boats Seizures.**

The PILOT finishes his coffee & the last of a cherry pastry, checks the clock on the wall, 6:02 A.M., folds his paper, napkins a second apple pastry & heads out to the tarmac.

**EXT.** Out on the tarmac, the morning dawn streaked in blues & violets, plane traffic comings & goings. We quickly see & catch up with NED, VALENTINA & LAURA.

NED & VALENTINA, worn thin, army green flight coveralls, hers oversized, pant & sleeves rolled up. LAURA, bellbottom jeans, tee

shirt, her little dog leashed; looking at a map with notations as NED finishes the V.O. reading of the flight agenda.

\*\*

NED

With the customized fuel tanks, it's non-stop all the way down to the Pacific entrance to the Panama Canal & Contadore Island.

After refueling on the island, we'll begin the second leg of the trip to the coastal airport of Arica, on the northern border of Chile.

We'll negotiate the buy this evening & rest up tomorrow for the return flight. Then Friday morning, it's back up to Contadore Island for a final refueling. Pay off Customs with arrangements set up with Tommy. And from there, it's a direct flight all the way back up to Lauderdale.

If all goes well, we'll be landing in Miller's Orange Grove, sometime Friday after midnight. You be at the grove waiting, make the pick up & we'll simply fly on to Lauderdale Airport.

NED passes the outline to LAURA who purse tucks it away with the map.

LAURA

Friday after midnight, Miller's orange grove.

NED

We'll call & confirm our departure before take off Friday morning.

LAURA

Oh, Larry & Jimmy are helping me out with that last minute charter Friday, so if I'm not home, just leave a message on my machine.

NED

Larry & Jimmy, perfect! Okay then, I think that pretty much covers it.

LAURA (handing each a small paper sack)

I got you all a little something extra to add to the lunches & dinners we packed up yesterday.

NED (inventorying)

Chocolate milk, bananas, Hershey bars, one, two, no, three packs of Twinkies?

LAURA

It's a long flight. A third pack for good luck!

VALENTINA (hugging Laura)

Nice!

NED

It wouldn't be any fun if we didn't run into a little bit of trouble.

LAURA (releasing a big hug on Valentina)  
I just wish I had the nerve to fly with you all.  
It's just all those miles of open ocean. I know  
eventually, I would get sick & start to freak. ..

NED  
It's okay. We want to keep the overall weight to  
a minimum anyway & besides, we need someone to stay  
behind for the pick up.

LAURA (eyes watering)  
I know, but I wanted to be the navigator or another  
back pilot like Val, or something more than just  
waiting around.

NED pulling LAURA in for a hug as she secretly slips her mom's,  
lucky M & M Tiffany lighter into his hip, side pocket.

NED  
Hey, we've got this. And I'm feeling really  
comfortable with Val at the yoke to cover me  
whenever I need a break.

VALENTINA  
It literally flies itself with the aid  
of the auto-pilot.

LAURA  
Okay then, well, how does the old story go?  
Believe you can & you're already halfway there.

VALENTINA  
All you need is a little faith, trust & a generous  
sprinkling of pixie dust.

LAURA  
So think of only the happiest things. It's the  
same as having. .. as having your pilot's wings!

NED  
Second star to the right & straight on til the morning  
turns a beautiful shade of.. . afternoon delight?

LAURA & VALENTINA look at NED, quizzical?

What? My mother loved to read me stories, like  
Peter Pan, before bedtime.

LAURA  
We are so going to celebrate when you all get back!

A final group hug, before the little dog barks, 'What about me?'

The plane roars to life & taxis out to the runway. They quickly  
line up & take off, circle the back of the airfield & head south.

**31**

**EXT.** SAME MORNING. A BEAUTIFUL HOTEL, OCEAN SIDE POOL &  
RESTAURANT VERANDA. GIOVANNI & HIS LAWYER, BREAKFAST.

View from behind a woman with natural full figure curves, tanned dark, wearing the infamous Farrah Fawcett poster, crimson red, one-piece swimsuit. Loosely barrette a section of red brick hair.

**NOTE-** Appears from behind to be POLINA FONTAINE, the undercover government agent, who randomly appears again & again in our story, always adding mystery & intrigue. We'll spend more time with her storyline & her adventures in Marseilles in the sequel.

She steps out to the edge of the pool, unoccupied, the water wrinkling with the breeze & dives in with little splash. We pan across the water to a beach ball in the center of the pool before moving over to a group of dining tables on the veranda, near the edge of the pool, looking out over the ocean.

WAITRESS (Spanish)

Okay gentlemen, anything else I can get you?

LAWYER

No, everything looks delicious, thank you Gabriela.

WAITRESS

Buen provecho!

LAWYER (toasting Mimosas)

Best breakfast in town, relish my friend!

GIOVANNI (digging in)

Yes! This looks absolutely fantastic. ..  
So you said you had some good news for me this morning, concerning the Remington painting.

LAWYER

Good news, indeed Giovanni! The Denver Museum's curator got back with me yesterday morning & after a lot of consulting back & fourth with their insurance representatives, presented us with an offer.

GIOVANNI

Fantastic! Let's hear it?

LAWYER

Sixty thousand dollars!

GIOVANNI

Sixty?

LAWYER

Upon delivery, directly to the curator & an additional 24 hours for authentication before payment.

GIOVANNI

I was kind of hoping for a little more.

LAWYER

The hundred thousand dollar reward was for the return of all three paintings & information leading to the arrest & prosecution of those



involved in the theft & the shooting.

GIOVANNI

I know, but it's a Remington & . .

LAWYER

It's a great deal Giovanni! And the two of us will sign a writ of no prior knowledge & in return, we'll receive a letter of complete anonymity, free from any prosecution. Your name will never be associated with the return of the art work.

GIOVANNI (rubbing his forehead)

Did you make any counter offers.

LAWYER

They initially offered us forty. I mean they could have called in the law, offer us nothing & simply had us arrested. And with your background.

GIOVANNI

Okay, okay!

I guess the reality of it is, I'm so strapped for cash, the sooner that we can get this all put together & done with, the better!

LAWYER

I'm one step ahead of you Giovanni. I've already got us booked on a flight to Denver out of Lauderdale for eight A.M, Friday morning.

The beach ball bounces & rolls up to the table & bumps into the side of Giovanni's leg.

POLINA FONTAINE/ALAINA TURNER/MONICA LAKE

Excuse me fellas, a little help please.

**32**

**INT & EXT.** NED & VALENTINA, FLYING LOW, APPROACHING THE SCENIC PANAMA CANAL, THE ATLANTIC OCEAN BEHIND THEM ON THE HORIZON. AIR TRAFFIC CHATTER PLAYS LOW VOLUME ON THEIR HEADSETS.

NED

There it is Val, the Panama Canal.  
One of seven, Wonders of the World.

VALENTINA

Amazing! . . . Centennial Bridge, right?

NED

Right, the start of some 50 miles of locks & waterways.

VALENTINA

I read over 25,000 workers lost their lives during construction. Thousands to accidents, but the majority to malaria & yellow fever.

NED

Then the least we can do in respect is lean back,  
enjoy & marvel at this masterpiece of human engineering!  
Select another tape, switch off the traffic  
chatter & enjoy the flight over if you like.

VALENTINA

Fishes out two cassettes of her own from one of her zippered  
pockets, placing one in the tray & the other in the tape deck.

I also put together a few tapes for the trip with  
a few surprises! How bout we start off with memories  
of your Mom & the ballet?

NED

Tchaikovsky's, The Swan Theme?

VALENTINA

Hum, change my mind. I want to save that for the  
landing at the vineyard, the big finish!  
Let's go with this cassette instead. (first up, 'I  
feel the earth move', a Harvest Jane cover)

NED (turns up the music)

Oh, I remember this. ..  
Love your Carole King impersonation & you are  
absolutely, rocking that bass line!

VALENTINA

Awe, thanks Ned. These recording are so ridiculously  
nice on your sound system with the layering of the  
interior speakers against the headset audio. It's  
like were overdubbing inside a flying recording studio.

NED

Like one of those Karen Carpenter's songs.

A musical & cinematic montage along the length of the canal from  
cameras mounted to the wings of the plane.

VALENTINA (Pacific entrance)

That's got to be the Bridge of the Americas ahead.

NED

Welcome to the vast Pacific, Val!

VALENTINA (a look at the fuel gauge)

And we made it easily, with fuel to spare?

NED

We've been simply gliding along with the trade  
winds. The return trip will be the real challenge

Ned pointing out an island, SW of the Pacific entrance.

Our refueling station, the Isla of Contadora.



VALENTINA

Amazing how the runway runs along the entire length or actually the width of the island.

NED

They say it's the perfect sanctuary for pirates & smugglers.

VALENTINA (unzipping the front of her coveralls)  
So it should be business as usual, squaring up these Customs officials for the return flight. (smiling)

ATC tower chatter before our plane dips & descends.

**INT. & EXT.** After refueling, the musical & cinematic montage continues as they begin the second leg of the flight, beginning with a T. Rex cover by Harvest Jane, 'Bang a Gong, Get it On'.

Scenic jaw dropping aerial views following the unspoiled Pacific coastlines, along & over Columbia, Ecuador, Peru. Soaring around Andean summits, never ending unfathomable Amazon jungles, cryptic archaeological ruins & cobbled colonial communities.

While cutting across, flying over the Western edge of Bolivia's mountainous jungles, they cross several, death defying, zip-lines on several mountain passes. An agriculture worker, with a giant bag of cocoa leaves attached to his waistline, flies down one of the zip lines to a waiting truck, down along the divide.

We follow the road & several trucks through the divide that leads out to a train station, then fly along the precarious track & over a train doing a balancing act along steep sided rails, before quickly dropping in altitude down to the city of Arica, the Pacific port city of northern most Chile, the sun slipping towards the horizon.

NED

Chacalluta International!

VALENTINA

It's like I'm dreaming!

NED

After we refuel for the return flight. I'll give our wine vintner a call & let him know we're just over the horizon!

ATC tower chatter as our plane circles the airfield.

**NOTE-** The Atacama wine region in Chile's far North produces large quantities of table grapes & other fruit year round. However, wine production is on a smaller scale. The region is however a prolific producer of Pisco, the Chilean eau-de-vie. A brandy-like spirit, distilled in Chile with the arrival of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish conquistadors.

The Atacama region, extremely hot & dry, much of it is composed of the Atacama Desert, the driest in the world. Viticulture in the region is concentrated in a thin strip along the coast, where access to water & the cooling breezes of the Pacific makes it possible to grow wine grapes & olives.

**33**

**EXT.** TWILIGHT, A COLORFUL DRAMATIC SKY. THE ANDES & THE DESERT SHAPE THE EASTERN HORIZON & THE PACIFIC OCEAN BOUNDS THE AGRICULTURAL OASIS TO THE WEST.

**INT.** Inside the Cessna, VALENTINA inserts Tchaikovsky's, 'Swan Theme', into the cassette deck.

**NOTE:** Swan Theme dramatic references, see YouTube's 'the Story of Swan Lake in Billy Elliott' & 'Billy Elliot Final Scene'.

**EXT.** BETWEEN DEFINED FIELDS OF OLIVES & GRAPES, A WINDOWS DOWN PICKUP TRUCK, RIFLE RACKED REAR WINDOW, PARKED ON A DIRT & GRAVEL ROAD BETWEEN TWO BARREL DRUMS OF FIRE.

**INT.** Inside the pickup, two Chilean farm hands, 50ish, weathered chiseled features, pressed jeans & work shirts, short brim gaucho field hats, refilling tin cups with the local Pisco brandy over the music of the Swan Theme, which plays over the entire scene.

MATEO, DRIVER (Chilean with English graphics)  
Look Ciro, here come our gringos.  
Straight ahead, just above the horizon.

CIRO, PASSENGER (Chilean)  
Ok, sure Mateo, I see them now. ..  
Gliding along there, like a giant, winged Condor.

MATEO  
Banking & soaring with the trade winds.

**EXT. INT.** Mateo flashes the truck headlights on & off & on & off again. The plane reciprocates, flashing their wing lights.

CIRO  
A very pretty plane, no Mateo?

MATEO  
Indeed Ciro, a very pretty plane.

Watching, refilling & enjoying plenty of drink.

CIRO  
Coming in a little low, no Mateo?

MATEO

Indeed Ciro, coming in a very low!

The Cessna begins to fill the truck's windshield's, entire POV!

CIRO

Holy Virgen de Guadalupe, Mateo!

MATEO

Say a prayer for me as well, Ciro!

Pulling down on the brim of their hats, raising their knees up against the dash, bracing themselves as the Cessna buzzes just over the truck with a whoosh, a loud heavy thump on the rooftop & a roar as Tchaikovsky's, Swan theme climaxes!

The two giggling & pushing on each other as MATEO watches the plane touch down in his rear view mirror. They toast their tin cups & drink them dry.

MATEO

Eso fuy muy . .. loco!

CIRO (still giggling)

Muy chalado . .. el realmente!

MATEO

Let's go round them up, Ciro!

**EXT.** MATEO starts the truck, U-turns it around, back between the two barrels of fire & speeds down the runway in pursuit of their guests.

**34**

**INT.** VOLGA WEST, MANAGER'S OFFICE, CLOSING TIME, THURSDAY NIGHT.

Muted dance music coming through the walls, the desk phone rings. Alone in the office, YEVGENI, wired, eyes red, picks up.

YEVGENI

Volga West, Yevgeni?

LAURA

Hi Yev, Laura Hemingway.

YEVGENI

Hemingway, finally you call me back!

LAURA

Sorry Yev, I know it's late, but I just got in & finally had a chance to listen to my messages. Good news though, I've talked to my friend & I can get you that quarter as promised. But if you have the cash, I can get you a full half, if you're still interested.

YEVGENI (rubbing his temples)

Half, at the price we talked about?

LAURA

At the price we talked about?

YEVGENI, his center desk drawer open, toying with a lunch baggie with less than a 1/4th of a finger of cocaine inside.

YEVGENI

You caught me a little off guard! But I'm somewhat close to what you're asking.

A knock on the office door, YEVGENI slips the baggie back down into the drawer.

Hold on a minute, Hemingway.

HOSTESS (no wait, comes in)

Here are today's receipts & cash deposits.

She drops off an unzipped, key lock, bank deposit moneybag stuffed with individual, personalized envelopes of cash on YEVGENI'S desk along with a stack of adding machine tapes, stapled together. YEVGENI puts on his glasses.

I've got all the waitresses & bartenders checked out & Terry already has the bathrooms cleaned & is just finishing up with the vacuuming. Okay if I go ahead & get out of here.

YEVGENI (examining the tapes totals)

Sure, you go! And tell everyone else to hurry up down there & get the hell off the clock!

HOSTESS

You don't look so good boss. Everything okay?

YEVGENI (drinks his vodka, rocks tumbler dry)

Why does everyone keep fucking asking me if I'm okay, already? (pouring another, cursing in Russian)

HOSTESS (already heading for the door)

Sorry boss.

Oh, Omar & Victor are downstairs waiting for you & want to know if the poker game is still on for tonight.

YEVGENI

Yes! And tell those idiots I'll be down in fifteen.

HOSTESS

Night boss.

YEVGENI picks up the receiver as he picks through the envelopes of cash in the over night deposit bag.

YEVGENI

Hemingway?

LAURA

Still here.

YEVGENI

Okay. Okay. Looks like I'm closer than I thought  
& I know where I can get the difference.  
We meet up tomorrow morning, yes?

LAURA

Tomorrow? Tomorrow? I've got a late morning charter  
& this telephone call. But ah, yeah, I guess I could  
meet you early. Say somewhere half way?

YEVGENI

Name it?

LAURA

You're down the road from the Volga, South  
Pompano, right?

YEVGENI

On the north side of the Lauderdale Airport.

LAURA

How about that Howard Johnsons along that open  
stretch of Highway 1. About ten miles directly  
south of the airport. Just up & across the road  
from that old Fire House.

YEVGENI

Time?

LAURA

Early? Let's say, seven?

YEVGENI

Seven's good.

LAURA

Just be on time is all I ask. I've got to get back  
down here & get prepared for a charter by eight-thirty.

YEVGENI (impatient, cursing in Russian again)

Pretty sure, I still know how to fucking tell time!

LAURA

Ah, okay, good to know. Well then, I  
guess I'll see you tomorrow morning, comrade.

Click. (YEVGENI hangs up)

35

**INT.** CHILEAN, BUSY RESTAURANT & BAR, A STRING OF COLORED LIGHTS &  
THE CELESTIAL STARS OF THE MILKY WAY LIGHT THE OUTDOOR PATIO  
EXTENSION & DANCE FLOOR. A LIVE BAND, FEATURING A DREAMY FEMALE,  
PERFORMS PERUVIAN-CHILEAN, LOUNGE BOSSA NOVA RYTHTHMS.

Surveying the venue, two Gaucho tuffs, standing, leaning back on  
the bar rail, smoking. We pan over to a row of half, circular  
booths, facing the dance floor, where DIEGO ROSALES & his farm  
hands MATEO & CIRO, dine with NED & VALENTINA.

A waitress opens a tall bottle of brandy, placing it in front of DIEGO before clearing away dinner plates. DIEGO, 60ish, fit, handsome, weathered sharp features, pressed work shirt & jeans like his farm hands, holds up the brandy bottle.

DIEGO (mixing English & Chilean-Spanish)  
In honor of our new partners Nathaniel & Valentina.  
From our very own estate, I present, The Valle de la  
Andes. A uniquely crafted blend of brandy & the San  
Pedro Cactus.

NED, pressed, un-tucked red stripe shirt, brown Nam cargo shorts, sockless, black Converse canvas shoes. VALENTINA'S figure fills a simple satin, pink dress with ruffles, her hair loosely barrette up, pink high heel shoes, disheveled & very sexy.

NED  
Brandy & cactus juice.

DIEGO  
Our spirited, Pisco brandy Nathaniel. Finely blended  
with the mescaline alkaloids of the San Pedro cactus.  
A hallucinogen that grows wild here in the Andes & has  
been used for healing & religious prophecy for over  
3,000 years.

NED  
Prophecy and healing, I like that.

DIEGO  
Just like Saint Peter holds the keys to the heavens,  
it's European namesake offers us the same opportunity  
to unlock & commune with the celestial & the spiritual.

VALENTINA  
What do you say Nathaniel, are we up for one more  
trip tonight?

NED  
We've come so far & you all have been so generous  
with your hospitality. It would be an absolute  
honor to share in your special vintage.

Sliding his glass forward, a smile over to VALENTINA who follows  
in same.

DIEGO (raising his glass)  
A toast to Saint Peter & the keys to heavenly visions.  
But hold tight to your souls as you travel, cause  
as everybody knows, the devil is never far away?

**36**

**INT.** RUSSIANS, SMOKEY BACK ROOM GAMBLING DEN, VODKA BOTTLES,  
EXOTIC FEMALE VOYEURS, MUTED RUSSIAN MUSIC PLAYS ON A TURNTABLE.

His chin resting on prayer hands, YEVGENI staring across the  
table, smoke swirls from the last of his cigar, heads up in a big  
hand of Texas hold'em, lots of chips in the middle of the table.



His cross table adversary, boisterous, with six times his two chip stacks, on a lucky streak. The dealer, one of the exotic females, peels off the river card, the last card face up. King of Hearts.

YEVGENI pushes forward, his two remaining chip stacks.

YEVGENI (drinks his vodka rocks tumbler dry)  
I'm all in Boris.

BORIS ((Russian & broken English)  
I call, Yevgeni!

YEVGENI turns over his hold cards, Ace of Spades & 8 of Clubs, pairing the Ace of Clubs & the 8 of Spades on the board, all black, the Wild Bill Hickok's, Aces & Eights, dead man's hand.

YEVGENI  
Aces & eights, all black?

The Russian slow turns his hold cards over, two black Kings.

BORIS  
Three kings, one red! (slap claps his hands together)  
I keep telling you Yevgeni. I'm unstoppable tonight!

YEVGENI oblivious to the laughter & chatter, rubs at the back of his head & looks behind him while reaching inside his sport coat for his money clip of folded cash. Fans out & separates four crisp one hundred dollar bills from numerous mixed bills into two piles. Changes his mind, restacks them into one pile & passes all the bills to the exotic dealer-banker.

YEVGENI  
Chips Tatiana.

Gets up & heads down the hall to a bathroom, passing a framed, photo print of Wild Bill Hickok.

**CUT TO:** Inside the bathroom, YEVGENI standing, zips up his pants, drops what's left of his cigar in the toilet & flushes. Side steps & reflects on his disenchanted reflection in the mirror while washing & drying his hands. He reaches into his sport coat, pulls out a baggie with little more than a dusting of cocaine inside. Disheartened, presses & seals it tightly around his nose for one last snort.

**37**

**INT.** RESTAURANT & BAR, WOMENS BATHROOM, THE LIVE MUSIC, MUTED.

Fussing with her hair, adjusting her dress, VALENTINA strikes various poses in front of a full-length mirror. Her image cactus juice, trippy & distorted.

Satisfied, exits the restroom, circles through the restaurant where everything & everyone is a little surreal, but with inordinate clarity, before stopping off at the bar & slipping comfortably between our two GAUCHO voyeurs at the rail. She helps

herself to one of their no filter cigarettes; an attractive female BARTENDER is quick to assist with a light.

BARTENDAR ESMERALDA (Chilean Spanish)  
What's your pleasure?

VALENTINA (Spanish, flirting)  
Tequila!

A pour, substantial, short rocks tumbler served with a lime wedge. VALENTINA shoots it, empty & bites hard into the lime.

Again please & one for yourself & how about a round for my friends! (the gauchos leaning in)

Eyes watering, VALENTINA raises the 2<sup>nd</sup> tumbler, a nod to the BARTENDER & to each GUACHO.

Salud!

Together, all four shoot their tumblers dry. VALENTINA knocks her glass tumbler into the first one before biting into the lime as the band begins a chic, sexy cover of 'The Girl from Ipanema,'

Wow, very nice!

A flirtatious wink to & is returned from the BARTENDER.

Thank you, Esmeralda! (Noting her name tag)  
And we thank you for the drinks, fellas!

Backslaps the two GUACHOs, cigarette in tow, turns & boldly steps away to the rhythms of, The Girl from Ipanema & continues out onto the open-air, patio & dance floor.

BAND SINGER (in Spanish-Chilean)  
Tall and tan and young and lovely the  
girl from Ipanema goes walkin' and when . . .

VALENTINA dancing, a provocative mix of salsa & merengue against the kaleidoscope stars of the Milky Way, the country of Chile, an astronomer's paradise. NED & the GUYS, slumped low in the booth, smoking & oddly, all wearing short brimmed Gaucho hats, skewed low on their foreheads. Eyes shadowed, hallucinating, watching VALENTINA's dance solo along with everybody else in the venue.

Dancing over to our booth, she gestures for one of the guys to join her. Jest from DIEGO & MATEO, CIRO grinning, volunteers.

BAND SINGER  
When she walks, she's like a samba that  
swings so cool and sways so gentle that  
when she passes, each one she passes goes, ahhhh

38

INT. EARLY MORNING, BLUE SKY, COOL. HOWARD JOHNSONS RESTAURANT & ICE CREAM PARLOR, EAST SIDE OF HWY 1. THE GIRL FROM IPANEMA, INSTRUMENTAL ONLY, CONTINUES ON THE DINING ROOM STEREO.

POV distorted, looking inside out of an ice cream freezer through a glass sectional at a waitress, name tag KAREN (from the opening bank robbery scene). She slides open, reaches in & digs out a giant scoop of vanilla & swings it over to the top of a tall glass of Coca Cola, completing a 2<sup>nd</sup> coke float, the other chocolate, now serving tray ready. We follow as she wades her way back to the dining room past a wall clock, 7:00 A.M., before pausing briefly at an elderly four top of new guests.

KAREN

I'll be right with you all.

Glides past another table, drops a check & lighter lights a cigarette, then paces over to our booth along a series of large picture windows, facing out to the parking lot.

KAREN (distributes 2 long spoons & straws)

Here we go guys, two coke floats, one chocolate, one vanilla.

TIMMY (admiring the big scoop of ice cream)

Thank you!

SCOTTY (admiring Karen)

Thank you, Karen!

KAREN suddenly distracted, staring out the big picture window into the parking lot where LAURA HEMINGWAY, big sunglasses, worn bellbottom jeans, anatomy fitting long sleeve tee shirt, sockless Converse canvas shoes, climbs down out of her pickup, ½ circles her truck, surveying the parking lot. Then just a quickly, KAREN checks herself & is back to work.

KAREN

You're welcome fellas! (big smile & departs)

TIMMY & SCOTTY, 14ish, tanned, bushy hair, weight lifting fit, 'Mustangs' logo, ¾ sleeve baseball tee shirts, worn jeans, black Converse canvas shoes; booth seated across from each other, window watching.

Two ten-speed bicycles, wire baskets straddled over the rear tires with schoolbooks, parked visible along the sidewalk in front of the picture window. These are same two boys that nearly got run over by JACK & then by LAURA, in the previous scenes.

TIMMY (crafty looking)

Did you catch Carnac on Carson last night?

SCOTTY (handsome one)

No, I was too tired. I went to bed early.

TIMMY (holding a napkin to his forehead)

You be Ed McMahan.

SCOTTY (clears his throat, McMahan impersonation)

Hermetically sealed, in a number 2 mayonnaise jar on Funk & Wagnall's porch, since noon today. .

A busboy clangs a tub of dishes, off camera.

TIMMY (Carson impersonation)  
May I have silence, please? (concentrating)

SCOTTY (lowering his voice)  
Only you in your somewhat, borderline divine &  
mystical ways, will ascertain the answer, having  
never before seen the question.

TIMMY  
May your sister be featured in NFL Films, sack  
of the week.

SCOTTY holding back laughter. TIMMY grinning, re-concentrating,  
re-positioning the napkin up to his forehead.

Superman, The incredible Hulk, Larry Csonka &  
Raquel Welch.

SCOTTY (echoes the answer)  
Superman, The Incredible Hulk, Larry Csonka &  
Raquel Welch.

Timmy looking, side to side for the source of the echo before  
tearing off the end of his paper napkin prop & blowing on it.

TIMMY (reading the napkin)  
Name four people with strong backs.

SCOTTY (the two laughing)  
Hi, oooh!

TIMMY  
It was either Nick Buoniconti or Larry Csonka, I  
can't remember, but my Dad about fell out of his  
chair after that one.

Wait, wait, I got one more. .. (grabbing another napkin)

Wake up. .. & smell the coffee.

SCOTTY (echo's, holding back laughter)  
Wake up. .. & smell the coffee.

TIMMY (looking first for the echo)  
What do you do after a one-night stand with Mrs. Olson?

SCOTTY (laughing, losing it)  
Wake up & smell the coffee, that's hilarious!

Hey, I meant to ask, did you happen to see Bob  
Griese, loosening up, throwing it around, during  
pregame warm-ups, before last Sunday's game?

TIMMY (Cosell impersonation, slow, deliberate)  
The wily & crafty Purdue Boilermaker, I did indeed.  
But, I've also enjoyed the marvelous play of our backup,  
Earl Morral, the Muskegon Spartan, who has been more  
than admirable, filling in for the cagey veteran.

SCOTTY (his Cosell impersonation)  
I favor equanimity over simply the admirable.

TIMMY (holding up a spoon, Cosell again)  
Eventually, it will all come down to opportunity & fate  
& who has the veracity & confidence to answer the door,  
as sometimes the miraculous, is actually seeking you?

SCOTTY  
Like your twice tipped, game winning touchdown  
pass to me last week against Dade County!

TIMMY (Cosell impersonation)  
That was young, Scotty Harper, telling it like it is.

During the jesting the boys & we watch LAURA, leaning up against  
her truck, twirl a perfectly rolled doobie between her lips &  
scratch match a light on a West Volga matchbook. A long dizzying  
toke before returning her gaze north, up Hwy 1.

Speaking of confidence & veracity, check out the  
groovy chick leaning up against that light blue,  
highboy. I think she's out there smoking a J?

SCOTTY  
The tall blonde? Yeah, a stone fox!

TIMMY  
Figuratively & literally!

SCOTTY (smiling)  
She looks like a blonde version of our waitress Karen?

TIMMY  
I think she looks like one of the cheerleaders for  
the Fish. The one who tried to tackle Joe Namath in  
the fourth quarter of the Jets game, back in New York.

SCOTTY  
Oh yeah! The one who stuck her boot out, nearly  
tripping Joe as he was scrambling down the sideline.

**EXT.** A 1971, Oldsmobile, 442 convertible, 455 V8, top down,  
appears on the northern horizon, coming fast. LAURA, a final toke  
before repackaging her smoke.

V.O. SCOTTY  
Check it out, an Olds 442, convertible. 1970, maybe 71?

V.O. TIMMY  
Not sure. .. Hey, the dude's turning in.

The Oldsmobile comes to a stop, parallel with the restaurant,  
left turn signaling, waiting for on-coming traffic to clear.

Might be making a play on your new girlfriend?

V.O. SCOTTY

Awe, no way? Not that guy!

V.O. TIMMY

She recognizes him. Look out Scotty.

39

**INT & EXT.** A BLACK 1970 BUICK ELECTRA 225, 4 DOORS, GLIDING ALONG NORTH BOUND, HWY 1. FRONT WINDOWS DOWN, CORNER VENT WINDOWS OPEN. THE O'JAYS, 'THE BACK STABBERS', PLAYS ON THE CAR RADIO.

Smoking cigars, un-seatbelted, his LAWYER driving, GIOVANNI passenger, finger drums on a long mailing tube resting up against the edge of the open window in rhythm with the music.

GIOVANNI

You know, I'm thinking it might be best if I just carry the painting onto the plane with me.

LAWYER

Can never be too safe. And no need to go into any long, drawn out explanations, if security were to stop & question you at the gate.

GIOVANNI

Sure. Keep it simple. .. How we doing on time?

Passing a road sign, 'HWY 1', before a speedometer look-see, they're flying, carefree down a newly paved stretch of open road.

LAWYER

Ah, we should be okay. .. So Gio, tell me. What are your partners going to say when you tell them, you turned in their Remington for the reward?

Giovanni smirks, sighs & rolls his eyes.

That's what I figured.

40

**EXT.** Hwy 1 runs parallel along the front edge of the Howard Johnson's parking lot. 'The Backstabbers' continues, playing on Oldsmobile car radio as oncoming traffic ends & YEVGENI left turns into the lot, three finger waves to LAURA as he parks one space over from her pickup truck, at the front of the restaurant.

A woman, maid's uniform, pulls in right after YEVGENI, parking just outside of him, on the opposite side of Laura's truck.

YEVGENI weary, eyes bloodshot, hair matted, his long sleeve silk shirt wrinkled & untucked, turns off the big engine. Reaches over to the passenger seat & grasps hold of a small, filled, paper sack resting on his sport coat. Seals tight, the slim fold along the top of the sack.

**INT.** View of the lot as, 'The Backstabbers', continues, plays inside on the restaurant. Exiting his car, YEVGENI fumble drops his keys. Retrieving them, clips the top of his head on the rear view side mirror as he stands.

SCOTTY

What a goof.

**EXT.** Wincing, rubbing the top of his head while surveying the lot, including a quick glance over at the maid who has yet to exit her car, anonymously, circles around the back of his car & on over to LAURA with his sack in tow.

V.O. TIMMY

I wonder what he's got in the sack?

V.O. SCOTTY

Thunderbird wine?

V.O. TIMMY

I'm betting, fried pork rinds.

LAURA (silly stoned)

Hey Yev, top of the morning!

YEVGENI

Mornin.

LAURA

You okay there?

YEVGENI (annoyed)

What? I'm only a few minutes late!

LAURA (quick checks her watch)

You look like you've stumbled out of a gutter.

YEVGENI

Thanks, don't hold anything back.

LAURA (stoned, playful)

That was a compliment. You also stink!

YEVGENI (holding up the paper sack)

Whatever. You bring the coke?

LAURA (flighty)

The coke? Hum, let me think. Did I remember?

YEVGENI (Russian getting thicker)

Come on, you got it or not?

The uniformed maid has exited her car & circled around to the front of the Olds, towards the entrance, before pausing in front of Laura's pickup, digging forgetful in her purse.

LAURA

Relax comrade, it's in the truck. But let's get some breakfast first? I'm suddenly starved & you can wash up inside.

YEVGENI (cursing in Russian)

Let's just fucking do this already. ..  
Please!

LAURA

Okay, okay. A man who knows what he wants.

She reaches for his sack. He draws it away. It slips out his hand, drops & hits the asphalt. Broken glass clatters & the sack quickly mushrooms wet with spirits, exposing a pint of Vodka.

LAURA

What the hell, Yev? Were you really planning on trading your breakfast for a half kilo of cocaine?

**INT.** View from inside, Three dog Nights, 'Liar', begins on the restaurant's stereo. LAURA gives YEVGANIE a sharp, two handed shove to his chest, knocking him back a step.

SCOTTY

Busted! Happy trails dude!

YEVGENI counters, stepping forward with an open left hand shove to the side of LAURA'S face, slamming it hard into the truck's driver's side window & doorframe, dropping her to the asphalt.

TIMMY

Daaaang!

TIMMY throws his hands up in surprise, the back of one hand accidentally catches his coke float, sending the tall glass, soda & ice-cream, crashing into the picture window with a bang!

**EXT.** YEVGENI, awkwardly steps up over LAURA, who is out cold, opens & half climbs up into the cab. Scrambling, locates the cocaine under the seat in a folded grocery bag. Spins back out of the truck with the bag cradled in one arm like a football, now facing the restaurant & our inquisitive maid.

Shaking his head, YEVGENI backs away, baby steps, alarmed at his violence. The MAID, courageous, moves towards him.

MAID

You overgrown punk. You better run!

YEVGENI turns & circles back around to his brother's car. The MAID turns back to an elderly couple, exiting the restaurant.

MAID

Go back inside & call for an ambulance!

Drops to her knees, tugs LAURA up into her lap, pressing a section of her uniform dress against the ugly cut down the side of her forehead & face.

YEVGENI starts the Olds, Three Dog Nights, 'Liar', plays on the radio as the big engine roars to life. TIMMY & SCOTTY, rushing out of the entrance, slowed, jostle around the elderly returning couple. SCOTTY first to get around, runs up to the Olds.

SCOTTY

Hold on there, grease ball!

His arms hopelessly outstretched along the front of the hood as the Olds, tires screeching, recklessly backs away & out onto the



Hwy 1, leaving SCOTTY grasping at air. TIMMY running right up behind him, fists clenched at his sides, ready for a fight.

41

**INT.** BACK INSIDE THE BUICK ELECTRA 225, NORTHBOUND, HWY 1.

GIOVANNI & his LAWYER, smoking cigars, carelessly soaring down the road. Three Dog Nights, 'Liar' plays, backing up in time on their car radio. GIOVANNI, finger drumming on the Remington tube, still resting on the edge of the open window.

Ahead, the old firehouse comes into view on their left followed by the Howard Johnsons's restaurant to their right.

They pass the old firehouse & quickly come up nearly parallel with the restaurant, with oncoming traffic, when the Oldsmobile suddenly appears, rear wheels smoking, backing up into the middle of their lane & quickly filling their windshield's, POV!

GIOVANNI

Look out!

LAWYER (leaning into the horn & brakes)

What the hellllll. ..

Horn blaring, brakes squealing, tires screeching, the Buick slams head long into the roaring, oncoming rear of the Olds. Metal & glass, crunch kaboom! GIOVANNI & his lawyer pitch head first into the windshield. YEVEGNI's head pitches backwards, then forward & into his front windshield.

**EXT.** SCOTTY gathers himself, backing away with TIMMY, arms raised in defensive positions as shards of metal & glass spray about them. The tubed Remington rockets up & out of GIOVANNI'S window, bounces & rolls just down the parking lot from TIMMY.

Lowering their arms, SCOTTY taps TIMMY with the back of his hand, nods & roams over to check on LAURA as several patrons, including our waitress KAREN, make their way out of the restaurant.

TIMMY dawdles down the lot a little ways, glancing back at all the activity around LAURA & inconspicuously, picks up the Remington tube & tucks it under one arm. Meanders his way back up & into the wreckage. Curious, disappears into the smoke as sirens can be heard wailing in the distance.

42

**EXT:** Vehicle rescue lights flash & arc on the aftermath of the crash scene as, Mott the Hoople's, 'All the Young Dudes', begins softly over the scene. KAREN, smoking a cigarette, closely observing as two EMTs lift LAURA on to a stretcher & into a waiting ambulance. One of the EMT's says something to KAREN before jumping into the back of the ambulance & racing away.

Over to the far side of the parking lot, TIMMY & SCOTTY riding away on their ten-speed bicycles, turning the corner, disappear down a side street. Following, we see TIMMY riding no hands, the Remington tube across the back of his shoulders, his hands curled over the top of each end. The grocer's sack with the cocaine, tucked neatly into one of the book baskets on Scotty's bicycle.

**NOTE:** The two boys will appear in the sequel. What will they do with a half-kilo of cocaine & what becomes of the painting. Will this twist of fortune & opportunity be the miraculous that TIMMY earlier philosophized, is sometimes seeking you?

43

**EXT.** DARKENING TWILIGHT, THE CESSNA FALCON FLYING LOW OVER THE OCEAN, APPROACHING COASTAL, WEST CENTRAL CUBA. A STORM FRONT WITH DARK, BILLOWING COLORFUL CLOUDS RUNS PARALLEL TO THEIR EAST.

**INT.** All the Young Dudes, continues over muted Spanish ATC chatter. Tract lighting running the length of the plane lights the scene. Shadowed on each side of the isle, loose fitting tarps draped over the back passenger seats & kilos of cocaine. Behind the pilot seats, two orange life jackets on top of a cooler & an open case of the San Pedro brandy with two empties visible.

In the console between the pilot seats, a half empty bottle of San Pedro Brandy, two Miami game cups, a pack of Twinkies, two-lunch Baggies; one of cocaine & a half sandwich in the other.

The instrument panel lights NED, piloting, cocaine steadfast, his vision cactus juice dreamy, seeking clarity.

NED (thinking out loud)  
Alaina Turner, Monica Lake. Alana Turner, Veronica  
Lake, names of old movies stars. ..  
I just want to get as far away as possible,  
like South Florida, maybe the Keys, where I  
can find a little anonymity?

Panning over to his slumbering co-pilot, VALENTINA, awakens.

VALENTINA (slowly, straightening up)  
Where are we?

NED (Spanish accent, playful)  
Cooba.

VALENTINA (dog yawns)  
Cooba?

NED  
Plan B, change of tact.

VALENTINA  
How long have I been out?

NED  
Sometime back, just before we came up on the Caymans.

Passing over the coastline, flying precariously low over the island of Cuba, just above the jungle tree tops.

VALENTINA (dry mouth)  
I'm sorry. I get all tangled up in this crazy dream.

NED

No hey problema. Freshen up your drink & do a bump or two & catch up with me.

She tops off both cups with the cactus juice brandy & drinks thirsty, the scene turning more surreal, with each drink.

So what happened to taking long way around, out & around the western edge of the island. Avoiding Cuba's, air space.

VALENTINA, reaching for the baggie of cocaine.

NED (flight turbulence)

It's these Southwesterly trade winds. We've been pushing up against them for some time now.

VALENTINA (a snort in each nostril)

Oh?

NED (nods over to her right)

Between that & trying to keep one-step ahead of the storm, we've eaten up a lot of fuel.

VALENTINA looks out her side window. Mythological size, dark, colorful storm clouds, billowing up to their east.

VALENTINA

Wow, it's like something you read about in the bible!

NED (glancing down at the radar)

Refueling east to Jamaica is obviously out of the question, plus Tommy could never, really square up any of their officials. (Lowering his voice)

So it's either abort, dump the coke & turn back to the Caymans for refueling or simply maintain a straight line & slip quietly across the middle of the island here. Otherwise we're going to run out of fuel, long before we ever get close, to getting back up to Lauderdale.

VALENTINA

But what about Fidel's, Revolutionary Air Force? His stable of Soviet, fighter planes?

NED

We're coming across so low; I'm thinking it would be nearly impossible for there radar to detect us for anything other than a flock of migratory birds.

VALENTINA (her best Russian accent)

Or maybe Eastern block diplomats, out for a tour of the country side?

NED

Sure, cause no way we could be drug traffickers, high on cactus juice & speeding across on cocaine?

VALENTINA

It doesn't look far?

NED (taking a drink)  
We'll be across in no time. Plus the guard more likely to be out patrolling the eastern or western, coastal fringes of the island.

**Cut to: EXT.** Muted street lamps, pinks & blues, light a teenage couple sitting on the Malecon Seawall. HE shaking out two smokes from a cigarette pack, SHE cupping her hands, blocking the wind as HE lights both smokes, the approaching storm tangled in her hair & loose fitting sun dress, out among various locals watching the waves rolling in & crashing up against the infamous seawall.

**Cut to: INT.** Cuba's northern coastline coming into view. Havana sparsely lighted, just visible out on the western horizon. Leon Russell's, 'Up on a Tight Wire' plays on the tape deck. Cocaine & drink inspiring VALENTINA's confidence in the crossing.

VALENTINA (looking west to Havana)  
We should have just flown right over Habana itself. Buzzed the Malecon. Come down the board walk about penthouse high, past the old Havana Hilton.

NED (smiling)  
We still could? A little, reverse psychology.

VALENTINA (nearing the coast)  
Well, that was simple enough.

NED (turns on the autopilot)  
We could almost swim in from here. You got the controls, I going to slip into my bathing suit.

NED smiling, break time, reaches for the last pack of Twinkies when ATC chatter, Spanglish, leading with their tail, call sign suddenly reverberates in their headsets over the music.

ATC - AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL, HAVANA  
Cessna 3 2 6er November Romeo.  
Air Traffic Control, National Air Defense, Havana.

NED turns up & dials in the ATC chatter.

Repeat, Cessna 3 2 6er November Romeo.  
Air Traffic Control, National Air Defense, Havana.  
On guard! You have been intercepted by Air Defense, M & G 23, Interceptor Fighters.

You are in violation of Cuba's restricted air space. Acknowledge by rocking your wings & begin working southwest, immediately! Set a course for degrees, 1 7 5er & proceed to Havana Jose Marti International airport for mandatory inspection.

Repeat, Cessna 3 2 6er November Romeo. Air Traffic Control, National Air Defense, Havana.  
On Guard! You have been intercepted by. ..

Flying just above the waterline, NED turns down the ATC chatter leaving just the music, turning to VALENTINA. Together, they look down at the radar screen, then, 360' scan the horizon & ceiling.

VALENTINA

I don't see anything?

NED (offering one the Twinkies to Val)  
Probably just trying to put a little scare into us. Get us to turn around. Confiscate the buy? Plus, I doubt if Castro even has any MIGs that are actually, operational?

Two blips suddenly appear on the radar screen, approaching fast from the south as Dr. John's, 'Right place, wrong time' plays next on the cassette.

What did Diego say, 'everybody knows, the devil is never too far away!'

We begin to hear the distant roar of jet engines from inside the cockpit, rapidly getting louder, then thunderous as two Soviet MIG 23s scream by, one right after the other along each side of the Cessna Falcon, our plane vibrating with the thunder.

VALENTINA (eating up her Twinkie)

You got a plan C?

NED chases the last bite of his Twinkie with a big swig of his brandy as we see the MiGs afterburners in the distance, circling & looping back around.

NED

Thinking now, might be as good of time as any for us slip into those life preservers.

VALENTINA unclicks her seat belt & climbs, half spilling over the back of her seat for the jackets. In one of the back passenger seats, seat belted, sits trippy-distorted either a homeless man counting beads or a holy man that could pass for St. Peter. Giggling stoned, coming back over her seat with the jackets.

VALENTINA

What if I told you, I think we have a stowaway?

NED, slipping his life jacket over his head, the plane banking, gradually sweeping up on its side, accelerating, directly towards the colorful array of billowing clouds to the east.

NED (steadfast, in control)

An old man with a long, beard?

VALENTINA (grinning)

Counting beads that could pass for St. Peter?

NED

He came up earlier while you were out & asked me if we had any peanuts. I figured it was just the cactus juice, told him no & offered him half of your sandwich.

VALENTINA  
Half of my sandwich?

NED  
Yes, & you'll be happy to know, he eagerly accepted  
& said your generosity, would not go unnoticed.

VALENTINA gathers up the other half of her sandwich, takes a bite before another look-see, back over her shoulder.

**EXT.** Sweeping round, the Falcon disappears into a giant billowing cloud followed by a brilliant streak of lightning!

44

**EXT.** NIGHT, COOL BREEZE. OUTSIDE LAURA HEMINGWAY'S HOME, HER PICKUP PARKED IN THE DRIVE, BACKED IN, NOSE OUT. NEW SHINGLES LINE THE LENGTH OF THE ROOF LINE, NOW COMPLETE.

**INT.** Harvest Jane band member JIMMY, long hair, flighty, Mopar cartoon car graphic on his tee shirt, driving a 1970 Plymouth 383 Barracuda, windows down with passenger LAURA. Leon Russell's, 'This Masquerade' plays low on the radio as they pull into her driveway & park in front of her pickup truck.

LAURA, ugly stitch ties down one side of her forehead to the top of one eyebrow, plus four more stitches continuing down along her cheek, hospital scrub shirt, hair matted & pulled back with a barrette, a pharmacy sack & her purse sit on her lap.

JIMMY  
You ah, going to be okay? I could come in &  
hang a while? Smoke a bowl, watch some TV, whatever?

LAURA looking at him with mixed curiosity, then noticing her pickup truck in the drive, parked in front of them.

LAURA  
Thanks, that's okay, I'm good. Is that, ah,  
did you drive my truck home for me?

JIMMY  
Larry & I went back & got it while you were getting  
stitched up. Here's your house & truck keys. We  
didn't know how long you would be out, so Larry  
gathered up your dog & took him home with him.

LAURA (a little confused)  
My dog?

JIMMY  
I'll give Larry a call tonight & see if we can't  
him back to you, sometime tomorrow morning.

LAURA  
Okay. Well, thanks for getting me out of that  
hospital Timmy & driving me home tonight. I've  
still got a big night ahead of me, but I can't  
remember. ..

JIMMY

Jimmy.

LAURA

Hum?

JIMMY (smiling)

I'm Jimmy. You called me Timmy?

LAURA

I'm sorry. Jesus, what a crazy, long day it's been. So thanks again. .. Timmy. (smiling)

JIMMY

Any time, Laura.

LAURA (closing the door)

So, I'll catch up with you in the morning.

JIMMY

In the morning.

**EXT.** With purse, keys & a small pharmacy sack, LAURA exits, walks up her driveway, holding her face up to the cool breeze. She glimpses over at the hair line crack on the driver's door window, confused, surveys the surrounding neighborhood as if looking for vandals, then continues on up into the open garage.

**INT.** Entering inside from the garage, the kitchen lights flash on. She tosses her belongings onto the divider & pads forward into the living room removing the scrub shirt down to her bra & grabs a long sleeve tee shirt from a stack of folded laundry on the recliner. Notices the light, flashing on the message machine on the divider, slipping on the shirt, ambles back around into the kitchen & taps the play button.

Next to the machine, she gathers up curious her green notebook, opened at a page titled, 'The Rendezvous'. She sets it down on top of a pot on the stove. Reading & listening to the machine, opens the fridge, reaches for a carton of orange juice & into the freezer section for ice.

**V.O. Message 1. NED**

Laura, Laura, Lauralie, 3 2 6er November Romeo. Good news, we have a full bag of groceries & are on our way home. E.T.A., some time midnight, tonight, Miller's Orange Grove. I miss you so much & can't wait (Valentina's voice interrupts from across the room) What. ..? Oh, okay. Mateo says we need to get going, our plane is drawing too much attention. So I'll see -Beep

**V.O. Message 2.** Good morning Miss Hemingway, Mike from Lambright Roofing. The remainder of the shingles came in this morning, should have your roof completed by this afternoon. We'll be by again tomorrow, around noon, to start work on the water damage along the center foundation wall & back bedrooms. Okay, see you then.

-Beep

V.O. **Message 3.** Hi Laura, Mary Nelson. We saw you & the terrible accident on the news this morning. Jeff, I & kids wish you well & hope to reschedule. Feel free to call anytime if Jeff & I can be of any assistance, otherwise I'll check in with you later in the week. Bye for now.

-Beep No more messages.

While the tape is playing, LAURA fills a Miami game cup with ice, breaks the seal on a bottle of vodka & heavy pours a drink with a splash of the orange juice. Her face scrunches confusion & recognition while skimming the notebook as the messages play.

Un-sacking the prescription bottle, pops two pills with a long pull from her drink before reading the instructions on the side of the bottle. Then, chases one more.

Checking the wall clock, 10:46 P.M., beach-bags the notebook, Vodka, purse & a flashlight. Slips back around & over to the recliner, pulls off a checkered quilt. Folding it over one shoulder, returns to the kitchen, shoulders the beach-bag, picks up her drink, keys & heads for the garage door.

Spins back forgetful, grabs & throws the prescription bottle into the bag. One last look at the wall clock before pulling a pizza coupon off the refrigerator. Lights out & the door thumps closed.

**INT & EXT.** Shadowed, smoking, a mysterious female seated in a purple, 340 Dodge Dart Swinger, watching LAURA get into her truck, motor down her driveway, the frontage road & out towards A1A. The voyeur starts up their car & follows, headlights off.

**45**

**EXT.** EARLY MORNING, SUNNY, AN ELDERLY FARMER, OVERALLS, JOHN DEER CAP, DRIVING A TRACTOR ALONG A DIRT & GRAVEL ROAD AT THE EDGE OF AN ORANGE GROVE. THE OPPOSING FIELD, CULTIVATED & TURNED OVER.

The FARMER coming up on LAURA's pickup, windows up, parked along the orange trees, tucked in, shadowed at the end of the roadway.

**INT.** Inside the cab, LAURA front bench seat slumbering, her quilt tangled about her. On the dash, orange wedges floating in a Miami game cup, the pill bottle & a cigarette pack. A flashlight, fading dim, lies against the spirals of her green notebook on top of a pizza box on the passenger floorboard.

We hear the tractor's engine turn off replaced by morning birds & boots walking in the dirt & gravel. The driver's window darkens, shadowed by the intruder. A gentle backhand wrap on the hollow of the driver's door, then a second wrap.

LAURA, disheveled, face swollen painful, hair matted, awakens & collects herself; a weak three finger wave, 'give me a minute'. A thirst quench of watery remnants from her drink & a rear view mirror, check on her face. Opens & stumbles out of the pickup.

FARMER (backing up)



Whoooooa, mare. ..

She gathers herself up, pulling back her hair, visually probes the stranger for some kind of recognition? Gives up, navigates past him, turns & raises up on her toes, searching the length of divide between the orange grove & the open field.

LAURA

Did you happen to run across an airplane?

FARMER

An airplane?

LAURA

A long nose, single engine Cessna. Shiny, like new, piloted by a young man & a Latin female. Would have dropped out of the sky last night. Sometime. .. after midnight?

FARMER removes his cap, scratches his head, looking back & fourth down the grove with LAURA.

FARMER

Dropped out of the sky, here in the grove?

LAURA (feeling a little dizzy)

What day is it?

FARMER

Saturday.

LAURA

Saturday, Saturday. .. Okay then. Well, thank you for your time, sir.

LAURA climbs back into her pickup, starts up & heads down the grove, rolling her window down as we drone POV upwards, searching the surrounding fields & groves before ending with a view of darkening storm clouds, far out in the Atlantic to the east.

**46**

**EXT.** NOON, A LAMBRIGHT ROOFING TRUCK PARKED IN THE DRIVEWAY, PAN OVER THE NEW ROOF TILES & AROUND TO THE BACK OF LAURA'S HOME.

Standing behind the pool, looking out at distant storm clouds along the horizon, Lambright Roofing guys, JERRY & MIKE, white overalls. Between them, LAURA, freshly showered, tee shirt, worn bellbottom jeans, barefoot, hands in her pockets, looking distant & detached. Her little dog napping, further out along the deck.

MIKE

Looks like we got the roof finished just in time.

JERRY

Tropical Storm Carrie or at least what's left of her. Suppose to hit landfall, sometime this evening?

MIKE

I saw it's wake of its destruction on the news this

morning. San Juan, Port Au-prince, Kingston & Havana before finally turning north & stalling out over the Bahamas.

JERRY

That pretty much covers all of hurricane alley.

MIKE

The devils triangle.

JERRY

Well Mike, Laura, what do say we get started on the interior.

**INT.** Furniture is lined up & stacked away from the central support wall leaving just the couch & above it, the framed poster print of Valentina at Joe Namath's apartment & the two abstract paintings by LAURA'S mother. A rolled up drop cloth & a tall inverted V ladder, are centered in the room.

Mike, pointing up with a metal extended tape measure at a series of watermarks along the top edge of the central wall.

MIKE

Let's go ahead & replace the entire top half of the dry wall on this side of the room. We need to get behind there anyway to see if there's any structural damage to any of the support frames. Then we'll work our way back along the hallway to the back bedrooms & see what we uncover.

JERRY

Hopefully, we won't find too many surprises.

MIKE (gets to work)

Fingers crossed.

LAURA unresponsive wanders over to the kitchen divider & picks up her cigarettes, Volga Club matchbook from atop a framed, high school picture of Ned. Visually notes that the phone & message machine are plugged into the wall jack.

JERRY

Now that we have some room, let's go ahead & move that couch down the hallway.

The guys lift the couch as LAURA, oblivious to it all, pads back over to the picture window, slides open the screen door & steps outside, closing the screen door behind her.

**EXT.** She pauses, opens the music cabinet, pushes in a cassette already in the tape deck. Shakes out a rolled doobie from her cigarette pack, rolls it lightly wet in her mouth, match lights & pads over to the rail & contemplates the bewitching storm clouds on the horizon.

A haunting, bluesy cover of, Jimi Hendrix's, 'Little Wing'. Extended instrumentals to last the length of the scene, similar

covers to YouTube, the 'Corrs - featuring Ronny Wood' or 'Alice Phoebe Lou's', plays softly from the hidden wall speakers.

The ocean breeze, cool on her stiches as she enjoys her smoke when her little dog wakens, startled. Looking skyward circles LAURA & pads over to southern edge of the railing, stops & barks at the southern sky.

LAURA

What is it boy? Silly dog, come her.

Pinching her smoke to the side of her mouth, walks over, scuffles playful, picks up & brings him back over to the center railing. He wants down & quickly scampers back over to the southern edge.

**INT.** The couch gone & all the odds & ends are cleared away, the drop cloth spread up against the edge of the central wall. MIKE & JERRY contemplate the large framed poster print of Valentina, posing at Joe Namath's apartment.

MIKE

Foxy, hey Jerry?

JERRY (being funny)

I was thinking beaver. .. but I don't know?

They carefully bring it down & take it over to the couch on the far side of the room & lean it back against the couch cushions, facing the opposing wall.

JERRY

These abstracts are really cool as well!

MIKE

Love the colors & creativity!

They bring down the abstract paintings, their frames hanging on simple nails & lean them up against the couch cushions, facing the opposing wall, circuitously exposing canvas paintings tacked to the backside of the same wooden stretchers. The simple, black woodblock frames are easily displayed forwards or backwards.

MIKE (stepping back)

Wow, look at these!

JERRY leans in close & scratches at the paint crackling on one of the masterpieces & steps back again.

JERRY

Original oil paintings. Early, mid nineteenth century?

MIKE

Like something you might find in an art gallery, somewhere along the Mediterranean?

JERRY

Or maybe Paris, hanging in the Louvre?

Leaning up against the couch & far wall, the two stolen Jean-Leon Gerome, bathhouse nudes from the Denver Museum of Art.

**EXT.** In the wind, we hear the faint sound of a plane coming from the south, attracting LAURA'S attention as a small plane comes into view. The little dog excited, turns & circles back behind LAURA & watches cautiously, from around one of her legs.

The color looks right, but soon disappointment, it's not the plane we were hoping for as we watch it fly by low overhead.

LAURA picks up & consoles her dog as the plane disappears up the coastline. Distracted now by something out on the beach, her little dog wants down. She opens the gate & releases him, running down the beach, barking & playing.

Returning to the railing, looking out at the darkening clouds along the horizon, she takes a long drag from her smoke. Exhaling, shoulders her tee shirt to her cheek & dries a tear.

RADIO (final musical lyric plays)  
Fly on little wing . . .

We're left with just the sound of the wind & waves crashing along the beach. Down the coast we hear the lonely swoon of a distant loon & out on the water, the ruffle & snap of a canvas sail.

Then the phone rings. . .

THE END

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Two sample photos of one of a series of beautiful, modified Cessna 'Falcon' 402s to meet, excite & simplify our storyline airplane.





A Hendrik Venter & Company creation, customizing stock, Cessna 402, airplanes. Six, Cessna 'Falcon' 402 airplanes, have been modified since 2017 by replacing the twin piston engines on the wings with a single engine Walter M601D turboprop in the nose. The nose, then lengthened, to correct the center of gravity, increasing the payload, top speed & use on shorter runways. Two extra fuel tanks are added to the wings, giving the aircraft a much better flight range, over 800 nautical miles.

The Walter M601 engine, originally designed for use in remote parts of Russia & Siberia. Rugged durability with minimal field maintenance requirements were top priorities. The engines have been widely used in twin-engine LET 410 aircraft for commuter and cargo operations. Walter Aircraft Engines is an aircraft engine & former automotive manufacturer. Its notable products include the M601 turboprop. The company based in Prague, Czech Republic has been a subsidiary of GE Aviation since July 2008.

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