L.A. CONFIDENTIAL

by

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Based on the novel by James Ellroy

November 16, 1995
Minor Revisions
OVER the opening strains of "I LOVE YOU, CALIFORNIA," a MONTAGE: a mixture of headlines, newsreel footage and live action. Economy Booming! Postwar Optimism! L.A.: City of the Future! But most prominent among them: GANGLAND! Police photographers document crime scenes. The meat wagon hauls ex-button men to the morgue. Where will it end?

EXT. L.A. SKYLINE - SUNSET

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

EXT. MANSION (HANCOCK PARK) - NIGHT

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

      MAYOR (V.O.)
Ladies and gentlemen, I give you
the future of Los Angeles!

INT. HANCOCK PARK MANSION - BALLROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

The Mayor wears a plastic smile, ignores it.
INT. THE MOCAMBO - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

INT. HUSH-HUSH MAGAZINE OFFICE - DAY

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

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

INT. HANCOCK PARK MANSION - BALLROOM - NIGHT

The party continues. The Mayor has moved off to the side with the power brokers. Patchett is a presence.
MAYOR
We're selling an image, gentlemen. Beautiful weather. Affordable housing.
(re: model)
Trouble-free transportation. And the best police department in the world to keep it all running smoothly.

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

CHASE (V.O.)

INT. HANCOCK PARK MANSION - BALLROOM - NIGHT
The Mayor continues.

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

As Pierce Patchett nods sagely.

INT. OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM - NIGHT
Wrestler GORGEOUS GEORGE prims and poses before flattening an opponent with a drop kick.

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT
An enthusiastic crowd adjusts their 3-D glasses.

EXT. COHEN MANSION (BEVERLY HILLS) - DAY
In monogrammed silk pajamas, Mickey Cohen answers the door, his pet BULLDOG Mickey Jr. at his feet. The police are waiting. REPORTERS' flashbulbs pop.

POLICE OFFICER
Mr. Cohen, you're under arrest.
COHEN
Bullshit. What's the charge?

POLICE OFFICER
Non-payment of federal income tax.

COHEN
BULLSHIT.

EXT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE - DAY

JOHN WAYNE gets his hand prints in the sidewalk.

EXT. WESTCHESTER BEAN FIELD - DAY

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

EXT. FEDERAL COURTHOUSE - STEPS - DAY

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

REPORTER
How's your bullshit now, Mickey?!

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

LOEW
Today is an auspicious one for the city of Los Angeles. Mickey Cohen has just been sentenced to ten years in federal prison for failure to pay income tax. As the District Attorney for Los Angeles County, it is my pleasure to declare our great city organized crime free. It is truly the dawning of a new day.

The SONG ENDS and so does the MONTAGE.

INT. PACKARD (ACROSS FROM BULLOCKS WILSHIRE) - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

STOMPANATO
There's this guy. He's blond and
fat, about forty. Likes the
ponies. Been pimping his wife to
cover his losses. Knocks her
around to keep her in line.

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

STOMPANATO
I figure the address is worth
twenty.

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

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

BUD
Happy New Year, greaseball.

EXT. 1486 EVERGREEN - NIGHT

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

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

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

Bud KILLS the IGNITION, picks up the radio.

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

EXT. 1486 EVERGREEN - BUD - NIGHT

steps to the house. Inside, we hear SLAPS, MUFFLED CRIES. Bud grips an outlet cord coming off the roof and yanks. The sleigh crashes to the ground with REINDEER EXPLODING around it. A beat. The fat guy runs out to investigate, trips over Rudolph.

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

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

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

BUD
You got someplace you can go?

She nods. Bud hands her the keys and the cash.
BUD
Go get yourself fixed up.

WIFE
(nods, determined)
Merry Christmas, huh?

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

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

INT. STAGE FOUR (VARIETY INTERNATIONAL PICTURES) - NIGHT

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

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

ACTRESS
Brett Chase told me you're the cop who busted Bob Mitchum.
(grinds closer)
These 'Badge of Honor' guys like to pretend, but being the real thing must be a thrill.

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

ACTRESS
You got your handcuffs with you?

JACK
Two sets.

ACTRESS
I'll get my coat.

They're interrupted by Sid Hudgeons.

HUDGEONS
Big V Jack Vincennes! May I have this dance?

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

ACTRESS
I know who he is.
The Actress storms off. Jack looks to Sid.

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

JACK
Is she?

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

JACK
You lost me, Sid. Who?

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

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

HUDGEONS
Jack! It's Christmas!

JACK
No. It's felony possession of marijuana.

EXT. 2245 MARAVILLA - NIGHT

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

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

JACK
Stand there with your camera. I'll stop here so you get Grauman's Chinese in the background.
HUDGEONS
I like it!  I like it!

INT. 2245 MARAVILLA - NIGHT

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

JACK
Police!

EXT. 2245 MARAVILLA - NIGHT

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

HUDGEONS
Cut!  Wrap it!


INT. 2245 MARAVILLA - NIGHT

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

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

JACK
Yeah, it's subtle.

Sid hands him a President Grant 50.
INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - DISPATCH DESK - NIGHT

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

EXLEY
What's on the call sheet?

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

EXLEY
Decorated?

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

EXLEY
I get the idea. You got a description?

YOUNG OFFICER
Of his penis, sir?

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BOULEVARD - HOLLYWOOD LIQUOR - NIGHT

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

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

OWNER
(laughs)
Sounds like a helluva party.

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

OWNER
You want it delivered?

LYNN
Before five tomorrow.

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

OWNER
I'll be right with you, Lynn.

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

BUD
Merry Christmas.

LYNN
Merry Christmas yourself, OFFICER.

BUD
That obvious, huh?

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

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

EXT. HOLLYWOOD LIQUOR - NIGHT

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

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

MEEKS
Get lost why don't you?

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

MEEKS
I got a license for that.

Bud removes Meeks' wallet, checks the ID.
MEEKS
Cut me some slack. I used to be a cop.

BUD
Turner Meeks? Never heard of you.

LYNN
(exiting store)
We just call him Buzz.

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

BUD
You okay?

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

PATCHETT
She's fine.

BUD
(menacing)
I'm not asking you.

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

BUD
Somebody hit you?

LYNN
It's not what you think.

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

BUD
What is it then?

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

Susan laughs. Patchett eases back into the shadows.

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

Bud considers Meeks' gun license, then hands him back the .38 and wallet. Lifting his booze, Bud watches Meeks get back in the car.
Stensland steps up as the cabbie starts to pull away.

STENSLAND
What's going on?

For an odd moment, Stensland and Meeks lock eyes.

BUD
You know him?

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

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON DUDLEY SMITH

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

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - MUSTER ROOM - NIGHT

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

REPORTER
Captain Smith, I --

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

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

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

As the Reporter scribbles down the quote...

DUDLEY
That's Smith with an S.

They laugh. Dudley points the way out.
DUDLEY
This way, gentlemen.

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

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - DISPATCH DESK - NIGHT

Ed Exley gets another report from the Young Officer.

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

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

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

As the photographer snaps Exley's picture...

DUDLEY
I was fortunate enough to be partnered with his father when I was a rookie. It makes a man feel old. That's a fact.
(a beat)
Feel free to get a feel for the place.

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

DUDLEY
A word with you, lad.

INT. DUDLEY SMITH'S OFFICE - DAY

Dudley pours two drinks, hands one to Exley.

DUDLEY
To the memory of your father.

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

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

DUDLEY
The day he got the Medal of Valor.
A simpler time.
Remembering, Exley invokes his father's favorite toast.

EXLEY
To the solving of crimes that require absolute justice.

Exley raises his glass, but Dudley just watches him.

DUDLEY
That was his favorite toast.
(a beat)
I saw the test results on the lieutenant's exam. You placed first out of twenty-three.

EXLEY
The youngest applicant by eight years.

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

EXLEY
I was thinking Detective Bureau.

We can see Dudley doesn't approve.

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

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

EXLEY
You're wrong.

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

EXLEY
Dudley, we've been over this.

DUDLEY
Answer yes or no.

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

EXLEY
No.

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

EXLEY
No.

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

EXLEY
No.

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

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

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

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - MUSTER ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

STENSLAND
Hey, partner. Grab a cup.

BUD
I got to write my report first.
PASSING COP #1
Hear about Helenowski and Brown?
They got into a helluva scrap with
six taco benders at some bar.
Helenowski lost six pints of

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

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

INT. PRECINCT HOUSE - NARCO PEN - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

CLICK. The line goes dead. Jack redials.

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

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

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

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

JACK
This is Sgt. Vincennes.
Requesting a name and address on a
phone number. Hollywood zero-one-
two-three-nine.
OPERATOR (V.O.)
(filtered)
Please hold the line... No such number is assigned.

JACK
I just called it.

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

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

INT. MUSTER ROOM - NIGHT
Exley surveys the carousing rowdies. Raising his voice...

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

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

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

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

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

EXLEY
What's going on?

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

EXLEY
I have the report right here. They're home with bruises and muscle pulls -- Oh shit...
Exley starts out after them.

INT. CELL BLOCK – NIGHT

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

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

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

INT. SQUAD ROOM – NIGHT

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

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

INT. CELL BLOCK – NIGHT

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

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

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

GARCIA
Fuck you, pendejo.

BUD
Yeah yeah...

GARCIA
And fuck your mother too.

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

EXLEY
(arriving)
Stop, Officer! That's an order!
Cops block Exley's way. As Bud looks over, Garcia kicks him in the balls. A dangling shot. Bud keels into the bars, Garcia stumbles out of the cell, smack into Jack.

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

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

**EXLEY**

You're going in my report! All of you!

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

**HALL**

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

**EXLEY (V.O.)**

Let me out! That's an order!

**CELL BLOCK**

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

**DISSOLVE TO:**

**INT. CHIEF'S OFFICE - DAY**

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

**CHIEF**

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

Bud glances to a gray tinted mirror, then to the Chief.
BUD
No, sir. I won't.

The Chief sighs, looks to Loew.

CHIEF
District Attorney Loew.

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

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

BUD
I won't do it. (staring at mirror)
I won't testify against my partner or anyone else.

LOEW
This man is a disgrace.

CHIEF
Your badge and gun, Officer.

Bud sets them on The Chief's desk.

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

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

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

THE CHIEF'S OFFICE
Dudley, Loew and The Chief wait as Exley enters.

CHIEF
Ed, your observations have been astute. What's your assessment of this situation?
EXLEY
The public demands justice, sir. This was a full-fledged riot of policemen. Shift the guilt to men whose pensions are secured. Force them to retire. But someone has to swing. Indict, try and convict Stensland and Bud White. Secure them jail time. Feed them to the sharks, sir. Protect yourself; protect the department.

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

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

EXLEY
White's a mindless thug.

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

The Chief interrupts with his own concern.

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

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

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

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

EXLEY
DETECTIVE lieutenant.

The Chief and Dudley exchange a look. Neither approves.

CHIEF
Ed, you're 30. Your father didn't make lieutenant until he was 33.
EXLEY
I know that, sir. I also know
that when he made lieutenant, it
was as a detective.

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXLEY
Yes, Dudley. I am.

DUDLEY
So be it.

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

CHIEF'S OFFICE
Round two. Centred on Jack. Exley is gone.

DUDLEY
Sergeant, we'll get right to it.
Nine civilian witnesses have
identified you as hitting Ezekiel
Garcia.
LOEW
But my office has a stellar witness who will tell the grand jury that you hit back only after being hit.

JACK
What do I have to do?

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

CHIEF
I'll guarantee you a slap on the wrist. A brief suspension followed by a temporary transfer from Narcotics to Ad Vice.
(a beat)
When you transfer out of Vice, you'll be back on the show.

JACK
The show, sir?

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

The Chief just got Jack where he lives.

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

JACK
Okay. I'll do it.

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

CHIEF
Dismissed, Vincennes.

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

CHIEF
So be it. DETECTIVE Lieutenant.
OTHER SIDE OF GLASS

Exley clenches his fist in victory. The Chief continues.

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

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

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

JACK
You're the key witness?

EXLEY
That's right.

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

EXLEY
THROWING ME?

JACK
Yeah, Exley. What's the payoff?

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

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

EXLEY
What about you?

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

At that, a CLERK steps in from the hallway.
CLERK
Edmund J. Exley to chambers.

As Exley's about to go...

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

INT. TWILIGHT LOUNGE - NIGHT

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

BUD
That an old fashioned you're drinking? (as she nods)
My name's Bud.

REDHEAD
Nobody was born with the name Bud.

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

REDHEAD
What do you do, Bud?

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

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

DUDLEY
Lad, may I have a word with you?

BUD
This business, Captain?

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

Dudley starts off. Bud turns back to Redhead, but she's already talking to a sailor.
Dudley sits at a table. A newspaper is opened, a little mound underneath. Bud joins Dudley.

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

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

BUD
Captain, what do you want?

DUDLEY
Call me Dudley.

BUD
Dudley, what do you want?

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

BUD
(looks away)
Yeah, I hate them.

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

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

BUD
What's going to happen to Stensland? He'll give himself cirrhosis over this. HE'S ONE YEAR FROM HIS PENSION.

DUDLEY
It would've happened years ago if you hadn't carried him. Why the loyalty, Wendell?
BUD
He helped me out once. That's all.

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

BUD
Him and me both. FUCKING EXLEY.

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

BUD
WHAT DO YOU WANT?

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

BUD
Doing what? Mowing your fucking lawn?

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

DUDLEY
They're yours. Take them.

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

DUDLEY
Four of the defendants recanted their testimony.

BUD
How?

Dudley dismisses the question with a wave of his hand.

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

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

BUD
(disappointed)
In Technicolor.

DUDLEY
Will you work for me?

BUD
Of course... But how?

DUDLEY
How what, Wendell?

BUD
How'd you get them to retract?

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

DISSOLVE TO:

L.A. MONTAGE
Over the pop song "STRANGER IN PARADISE."

A)  EXT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE - NIGHT

Frank Sinatra at the premiere of From Here to Eternity.

B)  INT. KLUB ZAMBOANGA - NIGHT

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

C)  TORCH SONG TAVERN (RIVERSIDE) - NIGHT

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

D)  EXT. FREEWAY - DAY

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

END OF MONTAGE

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - DAY


INT. HOLLYWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - DAY

A nerdy 14-YEAR-OLD asks Brett Chase:

14-YEAR-OLD
Why'd you become a policeman?

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHASE
Jack, I'll see you Monday on set.

JACK
I won't be there. They're toning down my profile.
The latest issue of Hush-Hush flies through. On the cover: "Gail Russell Caught In Love Nest. Nymph or No?"

INT. CITY JAIL - DAY

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

BUD
Domestic. Assault and battery.

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

CARLISLE
Ready to go, Bud?

BUD
I'll be there in five minutes.

CITY JAIL - HALLWAY

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

BUD
I hear you like to hit women.

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

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

INT. BEVERLY HILLS MANSION - STUDY - NIGHT

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

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

The heroin just sits there on the desk.
EXT. McNEIL PENITENTIARY - DAY

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

INT. McNEIL PENITENTIARY - VISITOR BOOTH - DAY

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

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

STOMPANATO
They shot him in his library.

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

STOMPANATO
Nobody. At least not yet.

COHEN
And what about the merchandise Deuce was holding for me?

STOMPANATO
Gone. Not a trace.

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

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

INT. BRIEFING ROOM - AD VICE - DAY

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

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

As the Vice Capt. hands it out for the men to examine, new member Jack Vincennes arrives late.
VICE CAPTAIN
Look who's back from suspension.
We're honored, Sergeant Jack.


JACK

VICE CAPTAIN
Vincennes, is there someplace you'd rather be?

JACK
Yeah, Cap. Back in Narcotics.

VICE CAPTAIN
Oh? Anyplace else?

JACK
Working whores with squad two.

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

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

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

Exaggerated "ooohs" and "aaahs" from the men.

VICE CAPTAIN
Dismissed, gentlemen.

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

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

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - NARCO PEN - DAY

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

Sid Hudgeons sits behind his desk, answers the phone.

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

JACK (V.O.)
Sid, it's Vincennes.

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

INTERCUT WITH Jack at his desk:

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

HUDGEONS
Something good?

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

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

HUDGEONS
Not a word.

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

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

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

EXT. HOLYWOOD STATION - PARKING LOT - TWILIGHT

As Exley pulls in, his two-way drones:
DISPATCHER (V.O.)
Park Rangers report three Negro youths discharging shotguns into the air in Griffith Park. Suspects are driving a late model purple Mercury Coupe.

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

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXLEY
His blood's always up.

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

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

EXT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Accompanied by Bud, Stensland reaches his car, loads his box of stuff into the trunk. Bud is moody, pensive.
STENSLAND
Don't look so down in the mouth, Bud. You nailed him good.

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

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

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

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

BUD
What are you talking about?

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

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

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

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

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

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

VOICE
Squad call! Nite Owl Coffee Shop
One-eight-one-two-four Cherokee!
Multiple homicides! Multiple homicides! Code three!
EXT. HOLLYWOOD AND CHEROKEE - NIGHT

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

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

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

INT. NITE OWL - NIGHT


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

SERVICE RUNWAY

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

FOOD LOCKER

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

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

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

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

EXLEY
Don't get sick! Not in here!

Exley shoves the Rookie, puking, out the door.

EXT. NITE OWL - NIGHT

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

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

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

EXLEY
Yes, I do, sir.

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

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

INT. NIGHT OWL - NIGHT

Forensics Chief RAY PINKER walks Exley and Dudley through.

PINKER
We got a total of forty-five spent 12-gauge Remington shotgun shells. Three men with five-shot-capacity pumps. All of them reloading twice.

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

DUDLEY
Why?

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

DUDLEY
(to his adjutant)
Get on it.

A FORENSICS COP approaches Pinker.
FORENSICS COP

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

Exley and Dudley react, look at each other.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - DAWN

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

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

DUDLEY

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

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM 6 - DAWN

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

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

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

DUDLEY

Come, Wendell, you can do better than that.

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

FLATNOSE

I know things. I hear things. Like with the Mick inside, things are on this weird slowdown. These shooter teams, bang bang bang, they're 86-ing Mickey Cohen's men.

DUDLEY

We know all that, lad. Tell us, who do these shooters work for?
FLATNOSE
I don't know. No one knows.
Maybe they're mavericks. You want
a prostie roust? Huh? Some narco
action?
(breaking down)
What do you want?!

DUDLEY
We want you to go home.
(to Breuning)
Uncuff him, Michael.

Dudley turns to Exley.

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

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

FLATNOSE
Motherfuckers!

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

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

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

DUDLEY
(to Breuning)
Sit him back down.

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

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

INT. EXLEY'S PLYMOUTH - DAY

They drive in silence. No love lost here. Finally.
BUD
Where are we going?

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

EXT. COUNTY MORGUE - DAY

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

INT. COUNTY MORGUE - HALLWAY - DAY

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

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

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

MORGUE MEAT LOCKER

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

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

The assistant pulls open drawer 12. A naked man.

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

EXLEY
Is that Dick Stensland?

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

BUD
Yeah, that's Stens.

EXLEY
Hell of a way to avoid a prison sentence.

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

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

Then, from the hall...

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

INT. COUNTY MORGUE - EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

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

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

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

CORONER
Is this your daughter, Mrs. Lefferts?

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

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

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

MRS. LEFFERTS
It seems like my Susan, but...

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

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

The Coroner lifts the sheet. Mrs. Lefferts gasps.

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

As Mrs. Lefferts swoons, Bud and Exley both hold her up.
INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

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

DUDLEY

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

(as the cops react)
As it happens, he was a Nite Owl regular. In the wrong place at the wrong time.

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

DUDLEY

Robbery looks like the motive. We have rubber glove prints on the register and preliminary forensics strongly lean toward a trio of gunmen. We do have one hot lead, so listen well. Three Negro youths were seen last night discharging shotguns in the air at Griffith Park.
A park ranger I.D.ed them as driving a 1948 to 1950 Mercury Coupe, purple in color. An hour ago, a canvassing crew found a news vendor who saw a purple Merc Coupe parked across from the Nite Owl around 3:00 A.M.

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

DUDLEY

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

Catcalls. Boos. The Chief steps to the mike.
CHIEF

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

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

EXLEY

He might as well have put a bounty on them.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

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

BUD

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

PARTNER

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

BUD

What I gotta do is for Stensland. My partner.

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

EXLEY

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

JACK AND REDNECK

Redneck chews tobacco, has a Texas drawl.

REDNECK

Where to, Trash?

JACK

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

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

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

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

INT. HOLLYWOOD LIQUOR - DAY

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

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

OWNER
That's all I have to go on?

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

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

BUD
Give me both. Billing first.

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

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

BUD (O.S.)
You must slay 'em at the country club.

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

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

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

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

BUD
Richard Stensland.

PATCHETT
I don't know him. Mr...

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

PATCHETT
(sighs, concedes)
You know I do or you wouldn't be here. How did you find me?

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

PATCHETT
Of course...

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

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

BODYGUARD
Everything alright, Mr. Patchett?

PATCHETT
(waves him off)
Fine, Philip. Thank you.

BUD
Where's the other guy? Buzz.
PATCHETT
He no longer works for me.
(a beat)
Find Susan's killer, Mr. White. I'll give you a handsome reward. WHATEVER YOU DESIRE.

If only Jack had been around to hear that.

BUD
Thanks, but no thanks.

PATCHETT
Against your code?

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

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

BUD
No.

PATCHETT
Then you wouldn't feel obligated to report them?

BUD
That's right.

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

BUD
(ignores comment)
Why were Lefferts' eyes black?

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

BUD
You wanna go downtown and discuss this officially?
PATCHETT
Wait. Our deal still holds?

Bud nods, his patience running thin.

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

BUD
What little studio?

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

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

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

BUD
I got her address.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LYNN
Hello?

OLDER GENTLEMAN
(Alan Ladd)
Is it the cops?

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

EXT. 9781 SOUTH DUQUESNE - DAY

A South Central plywood and tar-paper dive. A BLACK BOXER pounds a heavy bag/speed bag combo bolted to the porch. Wiry, a welterweight, he doesn't see Jack and Exley till they're almost on top of him.

JACK
Leonard Bidwell?

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

JACK
How's the left these days?

BOXER
What's it to you?

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

BOXER
What do you want, Mr. Policeman?

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

BOXER
Till 19-fucking-70.

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

Exley nods, this is true. The Boxer's still listening.
JACK
We're looking for three colored
guys who like to pop off shotguns.
One of 'em owns a purple Merc
coupe.

BOXER
You wanna get me a fuckin' snitch
jacket?

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

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

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

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

JACK
That's five minutes from here.

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

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

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

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

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

As he begins to mash up against her...

BUD (O.S.)
Hit the road, gramps.

Bud's standing at the bottom of the stairs. The Older
Gentleman strikes a pose. He still thinks he's Alan
Ladd.
OLDER GENTLEMAN
Alright. This time I'll go, but
next time --

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

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

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

INT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) - DAY
A nice breezy feel. The perfect place to shack up.

LYNN
It's Officer White, isn't it?

Bud nods, eyeballs the place.

LYNN
Can I get you a drink?

BUD
Yeah, plain scotch.

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

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

BUD
Are you sorry she's dead?

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

She steps back with a scotch for both of them.

BUD
Have you ever heard of Dick
Stensland?

LYNN
No I haven't. Do you know why
Pierce is humoring you?
BUD
You use words like that, you might make me mad.

LYNN
Yes. But do you know?

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

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

BUD
Why was Susan Lefferts at the Nite Owl?

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

BUD
Did Lefferts have a boyfriend?

LYNN
Like I said we were friendly, not friends.

BUD
How'd she meet Patchett?

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

BUD
Tell me about Patchett.

LYNN
He's waiting for you to mention mention.

BUD
You want some advice, Miss Bracken?

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

Lynn smiles again. She likes Bud. A beat.

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

BUD
Maybe I'm just fucking curious.

LYNN
You say 'fuck' a lot.

BUD
You fuck for money.

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

BUD
Yeah.

LYNN
Do you enjoy it?

BUD
When they deserve it.

LYNN
Did they deserve it today?

BUD
I'm not sure.

LYNN
But you did it anyway.

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

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

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

BUD
He had you cut to look like Veronica Lake?

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

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

LYNN
It was nice meeting you, Officer.

Out the door, Bud turns back. Blurts:

BUD
Look. I want to see you again.

LYNN
Are you asking me for a date or an appointment?

BUD
(suddenly unsure)
I don't know.

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

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

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

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

EXLEY
L.A.P.D.

JACK
SHIT. Someone beat us here.

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

CARPORT

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

JACK
Hey.

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

CARLISLE
What the fuck are you guys doing here?

EXLEY
Think of us as back-up.

JACK
What do you got?

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

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

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

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

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

Breuning actually has to restrain his partner.
EXLEY
Quiet. I'm ranking officer here. We go as a team. End of story.

INT. CORRIDOR - TEVERE HOTEL - DAY

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

EXLEY
Damnit...

JACK
What?

EXLEY
Glasses.

JACK
(chuckling)
Just don't shoot me.

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

ROOM 414

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

JACK
Freeze!

Fontaine freezes. Jones doesn't dare get up.

CARLISLE
Ace him, Jack.

EXLEY
Shut up, Carlisle!

Jack and Exley burst into a...

SECOND BEDROOM

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

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

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

Satisfied, Exley sets the report down.

DUDLEY
Ed, I want confessions.

EXLEY
I'll break them, sir.

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

JACK
You think golden boy can handle it, Cap?

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

INT. #1 ROOM – DAY

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

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

EXLEY
They call you Sugar Ray because of Ray Robinson?
(no answer)
They say Robinson can throw a four punch combination in one second. Do you believe that?

Coates just stares at him.

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

COATES
Say what and so what.
EXLEY
Did one of the officers work you over a little?

No bite. Coates just stares back.

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

COATES
Man, why do you keep asking me that?

EXLEY
Just getting my facts straight. Twenty-two makes it a gas chamber bounce. You should have pulled this caper a couple of years ago. Get life, do a little Youth Authority jolt, transfer to Folsom a big man. Orbit on some of that good prison brew, get yourself a sissy --

COATES
I never truck with no sissies!

EXLEY
That fucking Larry. I almost believed him.

COATES
Believed what?

EXLEY
Nothing, Ray.

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

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

Unseen by Coates, Exley reaches under the table, takes hold of one of three toggle switches.
EXLEY
Sugar, Larry told me you went sissy up at Casitas. You couldn't do the time so you found yourself a big white boy to look after you. He said they call you 'Sugar' because you gave it out so sweet.

Exley flips the toggle.

#3 ROOM

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

COATES (V.O.)
Larry gave it at Casitas! Man, I was the fuckin' boss jocker on my dorm! Larry's the sissy! Larry gave it for candy bars!

#1 ROOM

Exley flips up the second toggle.

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

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

Exley flips the switches off.

EXLEY
I heard you like to shoot dogs.

COATES
Dogs got no reason to live.

EXLEY
Oh? you feel that way about people, too?

COATES
Man, what're you saying?

EXLEY
Ray, we got the shotguns.

COATES
I don't own no shotguns.
EXLEY
Why were you throwing clothes in the building incinerator?

COATES
(trembling)
Say what?

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

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

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

COATES
Ty and Larry fuck with that shit, not me.

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

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

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

Exley flips down the switches, stands.

EXLEY
I'm going to take a break.

Exley opens the door, looks back in afterthought.

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

OBSERVATION ROOM

Exley enters.

DUDLEY
Masterful, Edmund. Your father
would've been proud.
(pointing)
This one's on the verge.

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

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

#2 ROOM

Fontaine tries to control his sniffles as Exley enters.

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

No answer.

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

No answer.

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

No answer.

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

No answer.
EXLEY
Larry, he called you queer. He said at Casitas you took it up the ass. He said --

FONTAINE
I DIDN'T KILL NOBODY!

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

EXLEY
Why'd you burn the clothes?

FONTAINE
(sobbing)
I just wanted to lose my cherry. I didn't mean to hurt her.

Exley can't hide his surprise at this.

EXLEY
Hurt who? Was she a hooker? Hurt who?

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

OBSERVATION ROOM

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

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

EXLEY
She may still be alive, whoever she is.

Bud's all ears.

#3 ROOM

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

JONES
This newspaper shit ain't shit.

EXLEY
Where's the girl? Did you kill her?

No answer, but Jones looks nervous.
EXLEY
You wanted Larry to lose his cherry, but things got out of hand. Is that right?

OBSERVATION ROOM

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

EXLEY
(over speaker)
Kick loose, Jones. I know you made her bleed, but that doesn't mean you killed her.

No answer, but Jones is squirming.

EXLEY
(over speaker)
If that girl's alive, you've still got a chance on this one.

JONES
(over speaker)
I think she's alive.

EXLEY
(over speaker)
You THINK?

Jack turns to Dudley.

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

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

#3 ROOM

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

EXLEY
Where is she now?
(no answer)
Did you leave her someplace?
(no answer)
Did you sell her out? Give her to some of your buddies? Tell me where the girl is!

The door blasts open. Bud slams Jones up against the wall. As Exley stands, he bangs his knee on the table. Pulling a .38, Bud breaks the cylinder, drops 5 shells on the floor.
BUD
One in six. Where's the girl?

EXLEY
Officer White, put down that
weapon and --

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

BUD
WHERE?!

Two more clicks. Jones spills.

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

EXT. AVALON BOULEVARD - EVENING

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

BUD
Give me one minute.

DUDLEY
You've got it, Wendell.

STREET

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

DUDLEY
We're going through the front.

ALLEY

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

SCREEN PORCH

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

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

BEDROOM

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

THE KITCHEN

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

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

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

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

EXT. GRAY HOUSE – NIGHT

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

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

BUD
Get her to the fucking hospital.

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

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

BUD
Get the fuck away from me.

Bud starts away, but Exley gets right in his face. Other cops begin to take notice. The ambulance pulls out.
EXLEY
How's it going to look on your report?

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

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

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

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

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

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

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

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

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - JACK'S DESK - DAY

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

EXLEY
Anyone seen Jack Vincennes?

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

CARLISLE
Is something up, Lieutenant?
Exley and Carlisle pull up across the street from a four-story Victorian with paint peeling off the clapboards. They jump out of the car toting shotguns. Carlisle waits as Exley checks the mail slots: "R. Navarette, 408."

INT. STAIRWELL - VICTORIAN BUILDING - DAY

Exley and Carlisle take the steps two at a time.

INT. 4TH FLOOR HALLWAY - VICTORIAN BUILDING - DAY

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

NAVARETTE LIVING ROOM


EXLEY

Nobody move!

Fontaine and Navarette raise their hands. A jostled beer bottle crashes to the floor. Reacting, Carlisle jerks the trigger. Fontaine goes down.

Navarette draws a .38, shoots Carlisle twice in the chest. Exley blasts Navarette.

Screaming, Jones pulls a .45 from his belt. Exley fires, blowing him right through the window.

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

ELEVATOR

Coates makes it inside, frantically pushes buttons.

HALLWAY

Here comes Exley. Stumbling, wiping Navarette's blood out of his eyes, he closes on the...
Coates watches as the elevator doors begin closing.

Exley charging.

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

Dissolve to:

L.A. Montage

Tony Bennett belts "Boulevard of Broken Dreams."

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - DAY

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

Insert - Newspaper Headline

Nite Owl Hero! Over a photo of Exley.

EXT. CEMETERY - GRAVE - DAY

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

Chief

We mourn the passing of a good man. The loss of Sgt. William Carlisle is the loss of his wife, his family and the entire Los Angeles Police Department...

A sea of dress blues. Jack looks bored, dressed too flashy for a funeral. Bud looks grim, rain dripping off the brim of his cap. As a Twenty-One Gun Salute is fired...
EXT. CEMETERY (SOUTH CENTRAL, L.A.) - DAY

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

INT. CITY OF ANGELS HOSPITAL - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

Exley talks with a tough, starchy NURSE.

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

    NURSE
    Absolutely not. She barely
    remembers her own name.

    EXLEY
    But --

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

    EXLEY
    No. That won't be necessary.

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

EXT. ORANGE GROVE (ANAHEIM) - DAY

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

INT. STATE ASSEMBLYMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

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

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

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

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

The Older Gentleman rises for an assembly vote.

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

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

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

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

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

INT. TROCADERO CLUB - NIGHT

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

EXT. WILSHIRE BOULEVARD - DAY

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

INT. OLYMPIC AUDITORIUM - NIGHT

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

INT. MIDDLE CLASS LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

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

Jack says something about "We appreciate your understanding during this difficult time." As "Badge of Honor" comes on the TV, the father responds with "Goddamn actors."
Leading, Jack looks through an open door where Brett Chase's high school "Sweater Girl" is being comforted by her mother. As she locks eyes with him an instant...

INT. PIERCE PATCHETT'S HOUSE – NIGHT

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

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS – DAY

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

CHIEF

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

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

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

DUDLEY

Your father would've been proud.

Exley uses the noise to have a private chat with Dudley.

EXLEY

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

DUDLEY

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

EXLEY

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

Dudley puts an arm around Exley's shoulder, smiles out as more bulbs flash.
DUDLEY
Breaking a big case sticks you in
a whirlwind. A little self-doubt?
It's natural. Just keep it
inside. Between you and you.

Exley considers his medal. It is an appealing thing.

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

INT. VARIETY INTERNATIONAL PICTURES - STAGE 4 - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

Jack turns to see Sid Hudgeons approaching.

HUDGEONS
You're back, boychick.

JACK
Sid, how are they hanging?

HUDGEONS
Down around my ankles.

Hudgeons scans the crowd, points someone out.

HUDGEONS
You remember Matt Reynolds?

Jack spots Matt Reynolds -- one of the young actors Jack
arrested on Christmas Eve.
HUDGEONS
The Grauman's Chinese pot bust. He just got off the honor farm.

JACK
What's he doing here, Sid?

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

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

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

JACK
And Reynolds?

HUDGEONS
He's queer too. Metro paid him two grand a week to fake it with ingenues. On screen and off. I'm getting him to fuck the D.A. for a hundred bucks. (winks) That's twice the fifty you got for wrecking his career.

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

HUDGEONS
Matt! Over here!

As Hudgeons heads over, Hudgeons points out...

HUDGEONS
That's D.A. Loew right there.

Reynolds gets a nervous bead on Loew. Hudgeons realizes:

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

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

REYNOLDS
Have we met before?
JACK

Yeah.

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

REYNOLDS

Was it a party?

JACK

Something like that.

REYNOLDS

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

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

JACK

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

REYNOLDS

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

Jack recognizes the name, bluffs for more information.

JACK

Yeah. Me and Patchett go way back.

REYNOLDS

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

JACK

Really? How?

REYNOLDS

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

JACK

Yeah. Me neither.

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

HUDGEONS

Dutch courage, kid. Drink up.
Reynolds downs a few gulps, looks across the room at Loew.

REYNOLDS
I don't know if I should do this.

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

Reynolds looks to Jack who gives a noncommittal shrug.

JACK
Loew's free. Congratulate him.

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

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

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

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

HUDGEONS
Where'd you hear that?

JACK
Around.

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

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

HUDGEONS
WHAT?
REYNOLDS
I can't do it.

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

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

REYNOLDS
And no one'll know about this?

JACK
It'll be our secret.

Showbiz.

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

INT. VICTORY HOTEL - ROOM SIX - NIGHT

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

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

DUDLEY
Where did you intend to start. Prostitution? Gambling?
(no answer)
Go back to Cleveland, lad. This is the City of Angels and you haven't got any wings.

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

INT. VICTORY HOTEL - BATHROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

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

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

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

INT. FRONT HALL - NIGHT

LYNN
(opening door)
Did you forget some --

Bud stands there, filling up the door frame.

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

BUD
It's Bud.

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

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

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

LYNN
If you'd called first, I wouldn't look this ridiculous.
INT. LYNN BRACKEN'S (1736 NOTTINGHAM) - BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

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

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

Bud doesn't answer, but yes.

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

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

EXT. 5261 CHERAMOYA AVENUE (HOLLYWOOD) - NIGHT

Jack sits in his car waiting. He checks his watch... 1:30. Well past midnight.

JACK
Come on, Sid. Where are you?

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

INT. 5261 CHERAMOYA AVENUE - NIGHT

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

EXT. 2345 HALBORO (HUDGEONS' HOUSE) - NIGHT

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

JACK
It's Vincennes! Open up!

Hudgeons opens the door. He's in his pajamas.
HUDGEONS
Jackie! You got some good scoop for the Sidster?

JACK
Sid, cut the crap. I --

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

Jack grabs him, jerks him into the door frame.

JACK
Shut up!

HUDGEONS
(confused)
What's wrong, Trash?

HUDGEONS
What happened with the kid and Loew?

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

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

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

Hudgeons starts away, but Jack grabs him.

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

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

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

HUDGEONS
Jackie! Big V! Let me get my camera! Where are you going!!
INT. AFTER HOURS CLUB - NIGHT

The BARTENDER walks down the bar to where Jack arrives.

BARTENDER
What'll it be, Jack?

JACK
(pulls out wallet)
A bottle of Scotch.

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

Jack grabs the bottle and starts out.

BARTENDER
Hey! Your change!

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

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

BUD
Who was that guy who was here earlier?

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

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

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

LYNN
So you saved her.

BUD
Yeah. But not for long.

Bud looks away. Lynn sees he doesn't want to talk about it.
LYNN
Do you like being a cop, Bud?

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

Lynn listens sympathetically. Bud's opening up.

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

Frustrated, Bud pokes at his own chest.

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

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

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

BUD
That simple, huh?

Lynn nods. That simple.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - EXLEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Exley looks up as a CLERK enters holding two files.

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

EXLEY
Clean?

CLERK
More or less.
EXLEY
Until he gunned down six people.

EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - DAY

Exley stands in the trees as a PARK RANGER approaches.

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

EXLEY
Then who phoned in the report?

PARK RANGER
Not us.

INT. FORENSICS LAB - DAY

Ray Pinker looks up from his microscope as Bud enters.

PINKER
Bud White, what brings you down to the basement?

BUD
I got a few Nite Owl questions.

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

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

PINKER
What do you want to know?

BUD
Anything off. Anything that didn't make sense.

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

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

PINKER
Susan Lefferts.

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

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

BUD
But she's moving away from the door.

(thinks; points)
Who was sitting at this table?

PINKER
Dick Stensland.

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

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

PINKER
You know, there is one thing.

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

PINKER
Cotton balls. I found them just inside the meat locker door.

BUD
EAR PLUGS.

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

BUD
It doesn't exactly play like dumb panic.

PINKER
What do you mean?
BUD
It's like they knew they were going to kill everyone before they went in...

PINKER
Yeah, so...

Bud just stares at the picture of Susan Lefferts.

EXT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE (SAN BERNARDINO) - DAY
A shingle shack dump. Bud walks the front steps, RINGS the BELL. Hilda Lefferts answers. She doesn't look so good.

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

MRS. LEFFERTS
Let my daughter rest in peace.

BUD
Five minutes. That's all.

INT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY
Pictures of Susan smile down from four walls. Vamp poses on a nightclub floor. Mrs. Lefferts is all twitchy and nervous, her eyes darting to a closed door.

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

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

BUD
Ma'am, I'm sure she was.

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

BUD
What was that boyfriend's name?

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

BUD
Stens? Was it Stens?

MRS. LEFFERTS
Maybe. I don't know.

BUD
Look at a picture for me.

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

MRS. LEFFERTS
That's him. That's him.

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

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

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

Bud starts for the closed door.

BUD
What's through here?

MRS. LEFFERTS
No! Please leave!

Bud kicks away the towels, opens the door, steps into...
Innocuous except for the smell. It hits Bud right off.

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

BUD
Easy. Tell me about the ruckus.

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

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

EXT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE (SAN BERNARDINO) - DAY

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

CRAWLSPACE

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

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

BUD
Buzz Meeks... Holy shit.

EXT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE - DAY

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

MRS. LEFFERTS
Was it... a rat?

BUD
Yeah. A great big one.
Bud opens Meeks' wallet, pulls out a couple hundred bucks and gives them to Mrs. Lefferts.

BUD

Here. Compliments of the Los Angeles Police Department.

INT. FORENSICS LAB - DAY

Ray Pinker looks up from an autopsy as Exley enters.

PINKER

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

The stiff is Matt Reynolds! Pinker continues working away.

EXLEY

The Nite Owl. Anything bothering you about the case?

PINKER

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

EXLEY

What are you talking about?

PINKER

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

As Exley's head swims...

EXT. LEFFERTS' HOUSE (SAN BERNARDINO) - DAY

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

MRS. LEFFERTS

Let my Susie rest in peace!

EXLEY

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

MRS. LEFFERTS

That other policeman already checked under the house and found not a thing amiss.
EXLEY
Officer White?

MRS. LEFFERTS
A sweet man.

EXLEY
(thinking
out loud)
Under the house.

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

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

MRS. LEFFERTS
My daughter was a virgin!

EXLEY (O.S.)
I don't doubt it -- Oh, God.

INT. HOLLYWOOD STATION - JACK'S DESK - DAY

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

INT. LAPD - FORENSICS LAB - DAY

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

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

INT. JACK'S DESK - DAY

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

JACK
Yeah. Sergeant Jack Vincennes
requesting. I need the home
address on a Pierce Patchett.
OPERATOR (V.O.)
Please hold, Sergeant...

As Jack waits, Exley appears in front of him.

EXLEY
I need to speak to you.

JACK
Give me a minute, will ya?

Exley clicks off the phone.

JACK
Damnit... WHAT?

EXLEY
I want you to follow Bud White.

JACK
Even I'm not that crazy.

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

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

EXLEY
Yesterday yes, today no. What happened last night?

JACK
Transfer me, suspend me. Just leave me alone.

EXLEY
You make a mistake?

JACK
Yeah. My whole life.

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

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

JACK
I ain't a priest, Lieutenant. I can't hear your confession.
EXLEY
Do you make the three Negroes for the Nite Owl killings?

JACK
What?

EXLEY
It's a simple question.

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

Exley watches as Jack continues down a hall. Then:

EXLEY
Rollo Tomasi.

Jack stops, looks back at him.

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

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

JACK
So what's the point?

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

Jack looks like he might cry, but smiles instead.

JACK
I don't remember...

Both men are quiet a moment.

JACK
I'm trying to figure what angle you're playing THIS time, but I sure as hell can't see one.
EXLEY
I've given up angles for awhile.
I just want to solve this thing.

JACK
The Nite Owl was solved,
Lieutenant.

EXLEY
I want to do it right.

So does Jack.

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

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

EXT. BROWN DERBY - DAY

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

CLOSE ON JACK

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

INT. BROWN DERBY - BAR - DAY

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

STOMPANATO
Wendell White, how's tricks, paesano?

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

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

STOMPANATO
What do you want, OFFICER?

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

Johnny taps his ring harder. The bottle almost tips.
STOMPANATO

Should I?

BUD

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

STOMPANATO

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

BUD

More.

STOMPANATO

More's gonna cost you.

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

BUD

How 'bout I give you your balls back?

STOMPANATO

(in considerable pain)

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

BUD

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

STOMPANATO

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

Bud loosens his grip. Stompanato gasps for air.

DOOR

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

BAR

Stompanato's recovering.
STOMPANATO
Meeks is probably in Rio or someplace like that by now.

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

STOMPANATO
I don't know. I swear it!

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

INT. BROWN DERBY - PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Jack's on the phone to Exley.

JACK
He's in the Brown Derby with Johnny Stompanato.
(see Bud exit)
Check that. I gotta go.

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

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

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

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

EXLEY
What's that for?

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

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

The woman, Lynn Bracken, leans forward to kiss her policeman. It may have been a long day, but she's every inch Veronica Lake. Only the hair's not over her eye.
They stand, kiss again. Lynn's gown spills down around her ankles. Bud scoops Lynn into his arms and the two of them disappear into a bedroom. A long beat before...

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

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

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

EXLEY
What's Fleur-de-Lis?

JACK
High line whores. With plastic surgery to look like movie stars. And who knows what else? It's run by this guy Pierce Patchett. You want to talk to him?

EXLEY
Yeah. But first I want to brace Stompanato.

INT. BROWN DERBY - ENTRANCE - DAY
Exley and Jack enter.

EXLEY
Check the bar. I got the restaurant.

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

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

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

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

STOMPANATO
WHAT?
As Stompanato stands, Exley flashes his badge.

EXLEY
L.A.P.D. Sit down.

"LANA"
Who in the hell do you think you are?

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

"LANA"
WHO IN THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?!

STOMPANATO
You are making a large mistake.

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

"LANA"
Get away from our table!

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

Jack pulls him aside.

JACK
She is Lana Turner.

EXLEY
What?

JACK
She IS Lana Turner.

INT. EXLEY'S PLYMOUTH - SUNSET

Rolling. The sky glows ahead.

EXLEY
How was I supposed to know?

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

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

Exley's Plymouth is parked on the street.
INT. 1184 GRETRA GREEN (PATCHETT'S) - LIBRARY - NIGHT

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

PATCHETT
I believe the Nite Owl's your area of expertise, Mr. Exley. I saw you on television getting your medal.

(turns to Jack)
And you're that other celebrity Hollywood policeman, aren't you?

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

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

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

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

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

PATCHETT
A vulgar term, but yes.

EXLEY
What's her name?

PATCHETT
Lynn Bracken.

EXLEY
Why's she seeing Bud White?

PATCHETT
Why do men and women usually see each other?

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

No.

EXLEY
Not good enough.

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

EXT. 1184 GRETNA GREEN - NIGHT

Exley and Jack head for the car.

JACK
Guy's as cool as they come.

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

EXLEY
This is Exley.

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

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

JACK
What are you going to do?

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

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

INT. LIBRARY (1184 GRETNA GREEN) - NIGHT

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

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

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

KNOCKING on the door. Lynn answers to reveal Exley.
EXLEY
Miss Bracken, I'm Lieutenant Exley.

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

EXLEY
Really? What did White say?

LYNN
He said you were smart. He also said you were competing with your dead father. How did he put it? Trying to measure up to a ghost.

Exley lets it pass. As he enters...

EXLEY
Let's concentrate on my smarts. Pierce Patchett made you, didn't he? He taught you how to dress and talk and think and I am very impressed with the results. But I need some answers and if I don't get them, I'm going to take you and Patchett down.

LYNN
He can take care of himself and I'm not afraid of you. And you forgot one thing, Lieutenant. Pierce also taught me how to fuck... Can I get you a drink?

Exley can't help but smile. Lynn smiles back.

EXLEY
Scotch.

Exley watches her as she steps over to fix the drinks.

LYNN
I'm curious about you.

EXLEY
Why?

She hands him his drink.

LYNN
Because Bud hates you more than he loves me.

Exley stews. Lynn watches him over the rim of her glass.
LYNN
It galls you that I know so much about you. You don't have information to compete.

EXLEY
Don't underestimate me, Miss Bracken.

LYNN
The way you've underestimated Bud White?

Exley's had it. A menacing step forward. Lynn's smile becomes a laugh. Lost to himself, Exley leans in and kisses her. Lynn pulls back, then kisses back. In a beat, they're rolling to the floor, shedding clothes.

As they trash the furniture, Lynn looks over his shoulder at her own reflection in a closet door mirror.

REVERSE ANGLE - INSIDE CLOSET

Two-way glass. Sid Hudgeons is in here SNAPPING pictures. As Lynn and Exley continue with their frantic lovemaking...

INT. FORENSIC LAB - NIGHT

Ray Pinker rubs his tired eyes.

PINKER
God bless dental records. Stiff used to be a cop. Turner Meeks.

JACK
BUZZ Meeks?

PINKER
You knew him?

JACK
Of him. He was around when I first joined the force. A bad egg.

Pinker could care less. As Jack's wheels turn...

INT. LAPD - RECORDS ROOM - NIGHT

Jack searches dusty filing cabinets with dates like 1939 and 1940. Reading one headed "Meeks," Jack lets out a low whistle. He's found something.
INT. PACIFIC DINING CAR - NIGHT

Jack waits at the bar, watches the door anxiously.

JACK
Come on, Exley. Where are you?

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

Spent, Exley and Lynn sit, half-dressed, on the floor. They're quiet. Then, through a smile:

EXLEY
How was I?

LYNN
Oh, the best I ever had. Absolutely the best.

EXLEY
(laughs)
You sound like you mean it.

LYNN
The silver screen's loss is your gain.

EXLEY
How about White?

LYNN
You want to know what Bud's like in bed?

She actually embarrasses him with that one.

EXLEY
I want to know why you see him. Is it a Patchett payoff?

LYNN
I see Bud because I want to. I see Bud because he can't hide the warmth he has inside him.

EXLEY
I'll take your word for it.

LYNN
I see Bud because he makes me feel like Lynn Bracken and not some Veronica Lake look-alike who fucks for money. I see him because he doesn't know how to disguise who he is. There's more if you want to hear it.
Exley shakes his head. He's heard enough.

LYNN
Does all that make it harder for you to hate him or easier?

EXLEY
I don't hate White. I really don't. It's just, in my business, it's the wild cars you have to watch out for.

LYNN
You don't like that you don't know how to play him. He doesn't follow the same rules of politics you do. That makes him dangerous.

EXLEY
You cut to the heart of things, don't you? What about Lynn Bracken? She going to be a hooker all her life?

LYNN
I came out here with a dream. That's gone, but I settled for reality.

EXLEY
Some reality.

LYNN
No. This is the means to the reality. But I'm not going to tell you what it is.

EXLEY
Why not?

LYNN
Because you'll use it against me. Won't you?

Exley doesn't answer, but the answer is yes. Lynn smiles.

LYNN
You're tougher than Bud thinks you are.

EXLEY
(smiles)
You're the first person to ever call me tough.
LYNN
Like recognizes like. I'm pretty tough, myself.

EXLEY
You, me and White, huh?

LYNN
Actually, Bud's only tough on the outside.

As Exley kisses her...

IN CLOSET
Exasperated that he's still stuck in here, Sid Hudgeons checks his watch, shakes his head in disgust.

EXT. 9608 VENDOME (SILVERLAKE) - NIGHT
Jack knocks at a darkened house. The porch lights come on. The door opens to reveal Dudley Smith in his bathrobe.

DUDLEY
John Vincennes. It's three A.M., lad.

JACK
Two minutes, Dudley. It's important.

DUDLEY
Lucky for you that my wife and four fair daughters are at the beach in Santa Barbara.

INT. 9608 VENDOME - KITCHEN - NIGHT
Jack sits at the table while Dudley makes coffee.

JACK
You remember Buzz Meeks, Dudley?

DUDLEY
A disgrace as a policeman. Straight D fitness reports from every C.O. he ever served under. What about him?
JACK

Twelve years ago he worked a vice roust with Dick Stensland. They arrested a Pierce Patchett on an extortion scam. Guy ran hookers. He'd have them photographed with their johns, then double-dip for some blackmail. Charges got dropped. Insufficient evidence. You were supervising officer on the case and I was wondering if you remember anything about it.

DUDLEY

What's this all about, lad?

JACK

Part of it has to do with a murder. I've been working with Ed Exley on it.

DUDLEY

You're Narco, lad, not Homicide. And since when do you work with Edmund?

JACK

It's a private investigation. I fucked something up and I want to make amends.

DUDLEY

(smiles, then...) Don't start trying to do the right thing, John. You haven't had enough practice.

Dudley walks over, hands Jack his coffee.

DUDLEY

Have you discussed this with anyone else, John?

JACK

No.

DUDLEY

Not even with Exley?

Jack shakes his head. Dudley raises a REVOLVER. He FIRES it at point-blank range, right into Jack's heart. Jack hits the floor, his cheek pressed flat on the linoleum.

Jack opens his mouth to speak. His lips form the words, but no sound comes out. Dudley crouches down beside him.
JACK
Have you a valediction, lad?

Dudley leans low, gives Jack an ear. As he dies...

JACK
Rollo Tomasi...

Dudley frowns in ignorance at the name.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Nothing mobilizes the police like losing one of their own. Dudley is at the podium along with Exley. Dozens of detectives take notes, including Bud White.

DUDLEY
Sergeant Vincennes' body was found in Echo Park at ten o'clock this morning. Killed by a single .38 round to the heart. One of our own, gentlemen. We cannot tolerate it. Justice must be swift and merciless. That's all.

As the men move odd, Dudley approaches Exley.

DUDLEY
Edmund, a word with you. We received a tip this morning. Did Vincennes ever mention the name Rollo Tomasi?

Exley tries to look like he's thinking as Jack calls from the grave. Screaming the name Dudley!

EXLEY
No... Where'd the tip come from?

DUDLEY
Anonymous. Probably nothing.

As Dudley moves off, Exley watches him go. Scared.

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - BUD WHITE'S DESK - DAY

Bud looks over as Dudley sits down across from him.

DUDLEY
You're perplexing to me these days, Wendell. You're not your old, cruel self anymore. I need proof that the extracurricular work I had planned for you remains within your grasp.
BUD

What work?

DUDLEY

I've long been involved in containing hard crime in such a way that myself and a few colleagues might someday enjoy a profit dispensation. That day will soon be here and you'll share handsomely. Grand means will be in our hands, Wendell. Imagine crime limited to the criminal element who perpetrate it. Imagine the means to keep the nigger filth sedated. But don't stop there. Extrapolate. Imagine the police in control. It's big, lad.

BUD

You lost me, Dudley. I don't know what you're talking about.

DUDLEY

You have your extracurricular secrets, I have mine. We'll hold a clarification session soon. For now, I need your fearsome old habits at the Victory Motel. We're going to brace a man who may know who killed Jack Vincennes. Can I count on you?

BUD

Sure, boss. Sure you can.

INT. FORENSICS LAB - DAY

Pinker looks up as Exley enters.

EXLEY

I want to know what you and Jack Vincennes talked about last night. Anything and everything. Start with the I.D. on the corpse.

A put-upon Pinker sighs.

PINKER


Pinker goes to his desk for a twenty-year-old photo of Meeks. He hands it to Exley, whose wheels are turning.
EXLEY
We got a dead ex-cop and a girl who looks like Rita Hayworth at the Nite Owl. Another dead ex-cop under the house of Rita's mother. It's not a good week for ex-cops.

PINKER
I got Vincennes in the next room. It's not a good week for cops in general.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - DAY
A RAIN STORM has turned the courtyard into a mud bath. As usual, a light burns in room six. Bud White parks alongside the other cars already here. He makes a dash for the door.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM SIX - DAY
Sid Hudgeons is cuffed to the hot seat. Dudley sits across from him. Dudley's henchman Breuning looms. Bud enters.

DUDLEY
This is Mr. Hudgeons, Wendell.

HUDGEONS
I'm happy to cooperate. You don't need to tie me down.

DUDLEY
It's for your own safety. Now what can you tell us about Sergeant John Vincennes?

HUDGEONS
Trashcan Jack. The Big V. I can tell you he's on the Night Train to the big adios.

Breuning cuffs Hudgeons in the side of the head.

HUDGEONS
Take it easy! I didn't have anything to do with him getting killed if that's what you mean.

DUDLEY
But you were business associates?

HUDGEONS
What does that have to do --

Breuning cuffs him again.
HUDGEONS
Okay so we worked together. It was an information exchange. I got him first class collars and he got me good stories. We were friends for Chrissakes!

DUDLEY
Alright. We'll drop that line for now. Next topic. Please comment on Pierce Patchett.

Bud looks over at mention of the name.

HUDGEONS
You think he had something to do with Vincennes getting iced?

Dudley sighs, looks to Bud.

DUDLEY
Wendell. I want full and docile cooperation on all topics.

Hudgeons flinches as Bud steps up, twice Breuning's size.

HUDGEONS
Okay. Okay. Everyone knows Patchett's worth a boat-load of greenbacks. From aviation, freeway construction. But the man has hobbies, too. He bankrolls B movies under the table and runs movie star look-alike hookers. And try this on: he's rumored to be a periodic heroin sniffer. All in all a powerful behind-the-scenes strange-o.

DUDLEY
And?

HUDGEONS
And what?

Bud digs a fist into Hudgeons' gut. As Hudgeons gasps to get his breath back.

DUDLEY
Reciprocity, Mr. Hudgeons, is the key to all relationships.

HUDGEONS
He runs call girls. Primo tail. Fixed up like movie stars.

Bud looms, rests his hands on the back of Hudgeons' chair. He doesn't like where this is going.
DUDLEY

And?

HUDGEONS

In my car. Blackmail shit. The trunk under the carpet. Patchett got me to photograph a cop fucking this gorgeous cunt Lynn, looks just like Veronicaaa --

Wooden slats pop as Bud tears the bolted chair right out of the floor. Hudgeons and the chair land sideways.

DUDLEY

Wendell!

Bud can't hear him. He uprights the chair one-handed. As his fist cocks back, he's restrained by Breuning and Dudley. This is no act. They can barely hold Bud back.

HUDGEONS

Get him away from me!

Bud breaks free, heads outside.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - HUDGEONS' CAR - DAY

Bud jams a tire iron into the trunk seam and pops it with a ferocious yank. He tears at the carpeting. A manila envelope. Bud rips it open and 8x10 glossies of Exley and Lynn spill out. Raindrops dot them, as Bud's in his Packard and tearing out of there.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM 6 - DAY

Dudley and Breuning watch from the door.

DUDLEY

I wouldn't trade places with Edmund Exley right now for all the tea in China.

Breuning laughs. So does Hudgeons.

HUDGEONS

Dudley, I thought you were gonna let the dumb bastard kill me.

(to Breuning)

And you! Learn to pull those punches a little better.

Dudley and Breuning stare at him. A bit grimly.

HUDGEONS

You can uncuff me now, fellas.
But no one moves to do so.

HUDEONS
Fellas?
(nervous)
We had a deal. You, me and
Patchett, We're a team!
(scared)
Come on, we're friends. We're --

As Hudgeons protests, Dudley slaps a hand over his mouth.

DUDLEY
Hush-hush...

As Breuning and Carlisle move in...

INT. RECORDS ROOM - LAPD - DAY

A wormish CLERK searches dusty filing cabinets with dates like 1939 and 1940. The same ones Jack looked through. Exley steps over from another row.

EXLEY
Anything?

CLERK
Nothing.

EXLEY
So on active duty, Meeks didn't make an arrest from 1938 to '43.

CLERK
Someone must've pulled the records.

Exley ponders the implications. Taking out the photo of Meeks, he gets an idea.

EXLEY
Where are the police academy files?

CLERK
I don't have time. I have --

EXLEY
Just show me where they are!
EXT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) – DAY

Blue, Lynn sits on her porch watching the rain come down. A SCREECHING on the wet street as Bud's PACKARD pulls up. She watches as he gets out and starts for the house. Lynn stands, holds her arms out. Bud stops short on the steps, out of reach, the rain soaking him.

BUD
Did you talk to Exley?

LYNN
Come in out of the rain. In the morning we'll have both our stories for breakfast.

Lightning flashes. Bud shakes his head.

BUD
I want to know about Exley.

LYNN
He's the opposite of you. He's more like me. Cold, calculating.

BUD
How'd you get to know so much about him?

More lightning. Lynn looks God-awful sad.

LYNN
Come in out of the rain, Bud.

BUD
You gonna tell me what happened with you and Exley?

LYNN
We talked.

BUD
So tell me about it.

LYNN
(looking away)
In the morning.

BUD
No. Now.
(a beat)
You fucked him.

Too tired to lie anymore, Lynn finally just nods.

LYNN
I thought I was helping you. I thought --
Bud backhands her, hard. Lynn faces straight into the next one as Bud hits her again. A third time as the sins of the father are visited on the son. Bud stops short as the self-realization slams home. Lynn waits stoically. She doesn't start crying till Bud turns and runs back into the rain.

INT. RECORDS ROOM - LAPD - DAY

Drawers are open. Files are everywhere. Exley's reached the end of the line. As he looks through one last file, he finds a stack of official photos. Then he stops short. There's a photo of four cadets and an academy instructor.

Two of the cadets are IDed as Turner Meeks and Dick Stensland. The instructor is Dudley Smith!

Exley looks up at the sound of FOOTSTEPS and Bud is there. Fury. He slams Exley, knocks him flat.

Bud's here to kill him. He hauls Exley up, pummels him, then throws him over the table. Then up into a wall. Plaster cracks. Bud's on some gonzo animal plane. Bud strangles him. Exley gags. It'll be over in moments.

Until Exley's flailing hands finds Bud's .38. Yanking it from his waistband, Exley smashes Bud in the forehead. Bud reels. But, blind with rage, he moves back in only to have the barrel of the .38 placed right between his eyes.

EXLEY

Why?

BUD

Lynn.

EXLEY

She told you?

Bud shakes his head. He's coiled, ready to make a move.

EXLEY

Who told you? Did Dudley have anything to do with you finding out?

Bud hesitates, the answer obvious.

EXLEY

Listen to me. Dudley killed Jack. It has something to do with Buzz Meeks.

Exley points out the academy photo on the floor.
EXLEY

Bud sees, but does he really? As Bud reaches for the photo, Exley relaxes slightly. Bud slaps the gun away, drops Exley to the ground. He grabs, begins slamming his head into the floor.

EXLEY
Think, goddamn you. Think...


BUD
I knew Stensland and Meeks knew each other. Meeks was with Sue Lefferts on Christmas Eve. The night I met Lynn. Lefferts' mother I.D.ed Stensland as Lefferts' boyfriend, but Stens pretended he didn't know either one of them.

EXLEY
Stensland and Meeks. What were they up to?

BUD
Johnny Stompanato told me when Meeks disappeared, he was trying to move the 18 pounds of heroin that went missing when Deuce Perkins was shot.

EXLEY
STENSLAND AND BUZZ MEEKS. Two-man triggers knocking off Mickey Cohen lieutenants. When they killed Deuce Perkins, they got heroin as a bonus.

BUD
Then something goes wrong. Meeks gets killed. Maybe Stens got greedy, killed Meeks and left him under his girlfriend's house.

(a beat)
The night he died, Stens was all mysterious. Said he had something big going down.

EXLEY
The Nite Owl! Stensland was going there to sell the heroin.
BUD
Somebody got wind of it, killed them all.

EXLEY
It wasn't the Negroes. The Griffith Park report was a phony. And, who says the purple Merc was spotted outside the Nite Owl?

BUD
Dudley.

EXLEY
The first guys to the car when Jack and I got there were Bruening and Carlisle.

BUD
Dudley's guys.

EXLEY
They didn't find the shotguns. They planted them.

BUD
It all keeps coming back to Dudley.

EXLEY
It's Dudley for the Nite Owl.

They just stare at each other a beat as it sinks in.

EXLEY
Pierce Patchett figures in, too. That's the angle Jack was working. Dudley must work for Patchett.

BUD
Let's just kill them.

EXLEY
What?

BUD
For Jack, for Stensland, for anybody else who got in the way. I've been trying to be smart. A detective. But killing those two fuckers, that would be justice.

EXLEY
Stay smart, Bud. We build a case. We play by the rules.
BUD
There are no rules! Why the fuck are you doing this? The Nite Owl made you. You want to tear all that down.

EXLEY
With a wrecking ball. You want to help me swing it?

Bud smiles. For a second he likes Exley.

EXLEY
Let's go see Pierce Patchett. Run a good-cop-bad-cop.

BUD
Which one are you and which one am I?

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

Exley and Bud make their way up the walk. Bud pulls his .38 from its shoulder holster, shoves it in his waistband.

EXLEY
You expecting problems?

BUD
Patchett uses a lot of ex-cop muscle.

FRONT DOOR

Exley RINGS the BUZZER. Looking back, Bud sees a pitching wedge and pile of golf balls abandoned in the grass. A single ball floats in the koi pond. Bud's eyes narrow at the sight. Not like Patchett at all.

BUD
Come on.

And Bud shoulders the heavy door right off its hinges.

INT. 1184 GRETNA GREEN - HALLWAY - DAY

Bud draws his .38 as he strides in. Exley tries to keep up.

EXLEY
(a screaming whisper)

What?

Double doors on the left open into a library. Bud stops short, slowly lowers his gun. Exley steps up beside him.
LIBRARY

Hanging from a ceiling light, Patchett's body slowly twists around, a toppled chair beneath him.

EXLEY
I don't think his ex-cop did him much good.

Bud goes to the body while Exley heads for a side table on which rests a typed sheet of paper.

Bud checks Patchett's right hand, the knuckles are split, two of the fingers badly distended.

EXLEY
It's a suicide note. Says he killed Jack because Jack had figured out a pornography scam Patchett was running.

BUD
He had help getting up there. Two of his fingers are broken.

EXLEY
We had one thing figured wrong. I don't think Dudley workd for Patchett.

BUD
At least not anymore.

EXLEY
Patchett's dead. He sent you after me. I'd say Dudley's tying up his loose ends.

BUD
(it hits him)
LYNN.

Bud dashes to the PHONE, dials. It RINGS. No one answers.

EXLEY
I got a guy who owes me in the Sheriff's department. West Hollywood station. He can be at her house in two minutes.

Bud shoves the phone into his hand.

BUD
Call him.
EXT. 1736 NOTTINGHAM (LYNN BRACKEN'S) – DAY

A county sheriff's unmarked parked out front. A DEPUTY behind the wheel. Exley's Plymouth pulls up behind. The Deputy gets out. MOVE WITH him as he steps BACK TO Exley, who's rolling down his window.

EXLEY
Is she inside?

DEPUTY
We took her to Hollywood Station for safekeeping. Someone worked her over pretty good. She wouldn't say who.

Exley looks at Bud. Bud looks down in shame.

EXLEY
Hold her as Joan Smith. No one sees her unless I okay it.

DEPUTY
You got it, Exley. And now we're even.

As the Deputy moves off.

EXLEY
Ellis Loew.

BUD
What about him?

EXLEY
Jack thought he was up to his neck in all this.

INT. DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OUTER OFFICE – DAY

A SECRETARY looks up as Bud and Exley beeline Loew's door.

SECRETARY
You can't go in there!

INNER OFFICE

Loew looks up as they burst in.

SECRETARY
Do you want me to call the police, Mr. Loew?
EXLEY
Ask for Captain Dudley Smith.
We'll have a party. Hot dogs and sauerkraut.

A beat as Loew considers his options.

LOEW
It's okay. These are police
(as she leaves)
WHAT do you want?

EXLEY
I want D.A. bureau men to tail
Dudley Smith twenty-four hours a
day; I want you to get a judge to
authorize a wire tap on his home
phone; I want authorization to
check his bank records and I want
it all in an hour.

LOEW
On what evidence?

EXLEY
None. Call it a hunch.

LOEW
(incredulous)
Absolutely not. Dudley Smith is a
highly decorated member of this
city's police department and I
won't smear his name without --

EXLEY
Without what, his smearing yours
first? What's he got on you,
Loew? Pictures of you and an out
of work actor with your pants
down?

LOEW
Do you have any proof?

EXLEY
The proof had his throat slit.
(a beat)
So far you're not denying it.

LOEW
I'm not going to dignify you with
answers. If you'll excuse me,
I've got a Jack Vincennes press
conference to prepare for.

Loew enters his bathroom. Bud looks to Exley who nods:
Go.
OFFICE BATHROOM

Loew is at the mirror clipping a few stray nose hairs. Bud enters full of menace followed by Exley.

LOEW

Unless you're here to wipe my ass, I think we're through.

Bud just glares at him. Loew shakes his head.

LOEW

Don't try this good cop/bad cop with me. I practically invented it. And so what if some homo actor is dead. Boys, girls, ten of them step off the bus to L.A. every day.

The MIRROR SPIDERWEBS as Bud slams Loew's face into it. Bud swings him around, forces him forward and shoves his head in the toilet.

He holds it there, finally lets Loew up for breath. Then backhands: one, two, three.

BUD

Dudley Smith. Spill.

LOEW

Call him off, Exley!

EXLEY

I don't know how.

More backhands. Holding Loew by the scruff of the neck, Bud marches him past Exley and back into the...

INNER OFFICE

Bud heaves up the window, practically throws Loew through it. Loew catches hold of the window framing. Bud hammers his hands loose with a fist and pushes him through.

OUTSIDE

Bud holds his leg. Loew screams as coins, comb and wallet spill from his pockets, plummet toward the street below.

INNER OFFICE

Bud shakes Loew, could drop him at any time.
EXLEY

Bud...

BUD

If I let you go, there'll be ten more lawyers to take your place tomorrow. They just won't come on the bus, that's all.

OUTSIDE

We hear Loew's PANT LEG TEARING loose.

LOEW

Okay! You're right! Dudley's got photos of me and Reynolds.

EXLEY

What's Dudley's scheme?

More TEARING. Loew's life may depend on the answer.

LOEW

Dudley's rotten to the core. He's taking over Mickey Cohen's rackets, his own hand-picked cops'll be the new franchise holders. Because of those pictures I won't be able to prosecute. Oh Jesus pull me up!

INNER OFFICE


LOEW

Dudley's got everyone under his thumb. Not just me, but the Chief of Police, the lieutenant governor, everybody!

Exley pulls his .38, shoves it into the side of Loew's neck.

EXLEY

NOT EVERYBODY. You tip-off Dudley and Officer White visits you alone next time.

Loew looks at Bud, nods, his face a bloody mess.

EXT. CITY OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Exley and Bud exit. Bud's wheels are turning.
They never made a match on the shotgun serial numbers. What if Breuning and Carlisle took them from the evidence room? Couple of cold pieces that had been hanging around a year or two.

EXLEY
We should check the records, and, we should talk to Lynn.

Bud just stares at him a beat.

EXLEY
You want to talk to her?

Bud looks away, shakes his head "no." Finally...

BUD
You do it. I'll check the files.

INT. SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT - HOLDING ROOM - DAY

Lynn looks up as Exley enters. her face is puffy, swollen.

LYNN
(dry)
If I knew you were coming I'd have baked a cake.

EXLEY
Forget everything else for a second, Lynn. Is there anything you can give me on Dudley Smith?

A blank look from her.

EXLEY
A police captain. I think he's behind all of this.

LYNN
(shakes her head)
I work for Patchett. I had a feeling that there was someone else, but I never knew who.

EXLEY
Okay. Look, if it helps, Bud hates himself for what he did.

LYNN
(a beat)
I know how he feels.
A beat as Exley wonders how he should interpret this.

EXLEY
I don't know if it's pathetic or romantic, but when this is all over I'd like to see you again.

Lynn looks away, can't help an ironic smile even as she starts to cry. As Exley gives her his handkerchief...

INT. LAPD - EVIDENCE ROOM - NIGHT

Bud waits at the cage window as a RECORDER returns with some information.

RECORDER
I got your guns, Bud. Signed in April 3rd, 1950. Remember the First Western bank robbery? They were used in that.

BUD
I want to see them.

RECORDER
No can do. I can't find them.

As Bud thinks, a ROOKIE-TYPE approaches.

ROOKIE-TYPE
Uh -- Sergeant White?

BUD
WHAT?

ROOKIE-TYPE
Dispatch just got a call for you. Lieutenant Exley wants you to meet him at the Victory Motel.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - SUNSET

Bud's Packard crests the rise looking down on the Victory. Exley's Plymouth is in the courtyard.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM 6 - SUNSET

Exley in the hotseat. Sitting there thinking. At a CAR DOOR CLOSING, he goes to the door.

ANOTHER ANGLE

Exley opens the door as Bud approaches, toting a shotgun. The sun is down. The sky is just a dull glow.
BUD
You wanted to meet here?

EXLEY
Me? You called it. I got a message that...

As the reality sinks in, Bud and Exley hear TIRES on the GRAVEL; CARS are COMING. Being in a concavity, they don't see them yet. Then the CARS STOP. But still Bud and Exley can't see anything. They hear the CLICKS of CAR DOORS OPENING, but they don't hear them shut. There are FOOTSTEPS, MURMURED WHISPERS. More CARS PULL UP.

EXLEY
Shit... Come on.

Exley starts for his car, but Bud holds him back.

BUD
Too late.

A beat. Resigned, Exley nods. They retreat back to Room 6, disappear inside. A beat. There's MOVEMENT in the shadows to the left. To the right.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - ROOM 6 - NIGHT

There's a big back window. Bud covers most of it with a ratty old mattress. He pumps the shotgun.

He pulls a .45 automatic from his waistband.

BUD
Here.

He throws the auto to Exley, pulls out a .38. Bud's armed for bear.

EXLEY
You figured this was a set-up?
And you showed up anyway?

BUD
A lot of bad stuff happened here.
It's as good a place as any for it to end.

Bud switches off the light. They wait in silence. Then:

EXLEY
You know, all I ever wanted was to measure up to my father.
BUD
(softly)
I spent years trying not to live
down to mine.
(thinking)
We should block off the bathroom.
They could come through --

A CREAK outside the front door. Bud levels the SHOTGUN.
BOOM! The DOOR is BLOWN OFF ITS HINGES. We see the
figure of a man sprawl back in the dirt. In the darkness
beyond, MUZZLE FLASHES from all around. Exley and Bud
RETURN FIRE.

We hear the BACK WINDOW BREAK under a MUFFLED BLOW. Bud
charges back, yanks down the mattress revealing two men
climbing through. Sitting ducks: torn apart by THREE
TRIPLE-AUGHT ROUNDS close in. A beat, then...

EXLEY
We got him!

Bud smiles, in on the plan as there's an answering WHOOP.
A third man looks through the window. BOOM! Bud nails
him.

Bud motions Exley to stay put, then slips out the window.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - NIGHT

Bud crouches, looks between the cinder blocks supporting
the room. Two sets of feet shuffling along. Bud FIRES
the SHOTGUN. Shrieks as the men go down. Bud extends
the .38 to fire point blank headshots. Then...

Bud flattens himself as a wicked CROSSFIRE TEARS UP ROOM
6.

INT. VICTORY MOTEL - NIGHT

Exley is forced down as well, lying flat as plaster rains
down.

The door frame splinters as more Dudley men charge in.
Four men with rifles. One is Patchett's Burly Bodyguard.
They spot Exley lying there. Hushed whispers as they
approach: "Dead meat." "Be careful." Kicks in the
side. The men look at each other, sneer.

Exley jerks a foot. The foot man stumbles as Exley spins
around SHOOTING. FIRING the .45 and his own .38. All
four men go down. Exley stands, digs into his pocket to
reload.

Bud scrambles back through the window. Exley looks over
and smiles as Bud reloads the shotgun. It's dead quiet.
EXLEY
I'm thinking we might walk away from this.

At that instant, Dudley steps through the bathroom door. He's got Exley dead to rights. As he squeezes the trigger, Bud leaps forward, pushes Exley hard to the ground.

The SHOT passes through Bud's back by his left shoulder blade. It spins him around. A SECOND SHOT to the stomach slows him to a walk as he charges Dudley. A THIRD ROUND SHATTERS Bud's jaw, but still he comes. Driven by rage, his hands reaching for Dudley's throat. He even gets hold before a FOURTH SLUG tears his chest.

Bud falls hard.

Dudley swings his aim to Exley who's just managed to shake the cobwebs of being flattened by Bud. A frozen moment.

DUDLEY
I'm loathe to kill my brother officers, Edmund.

EXLEY
Tell that to Jack Vincennes. To Stensland.

DUDLEY
Jack was a shame, but Dick Stensland had the audacity to try to sell me my own heroin. Through his whore girl friend. I sent him to make the buy. The rest is history.

EXLEY
Why?

DUDLEY
A vacuum, Edmund. That's what we have in Los Angeles. Sending Mickey Cohen up created it. My containment work maintained it. Certain photographs guarantee it. Organized crime has been held back, but there's still a demand for the services it provides.

EXLEY
And now you'll provide them.
Absolutely. Prostitution and gambling are victimless crimes. The heroin we'll run down to the coloreds. Anesthetize them. As long as it's not a middle class problem, no one will care. It's still a crime free city... for respectable people.

Dudley aims the .38, cocks back the hammer. We hear DISTANT POLICE SIRENS.

This isn't politics, Edmund. There won't be winners and losers when it's over...

Dudley doesn't see Bud stir, reach into a pocket.

Just the living and the dead. It's always been that way in the Bureau. You should've realized that before you became a detective.

It's over. Dudley's finger tightens on the trigger. But Dudley screams as Bud buries a switchblade into his left calf. It took all Bud had left. As he collapses...

Dudley wails; Exley dives for Bud's shotgun. Dudley FIRES, misses. A wild SHOTGUN BLAST takes out half the wall. Dudley stumbles out the door. SIRENS BLARE.

EXT. VICTORY MOTEL - NIGHT

Dudley drops his gun as the cruisers stream down. Exley steps out behind him, but doesn't drop the shotgun. The two of them are bleached white by headlights.

Dudley raises his badge over his head.

We're policemen!
(winks)
Let me do the talking. They'll make you Chief of Detectives.

Exley steps ahead to block his way.

NO.

Why not, lad? Absolute justice?
EXLEY
Something like that.

DUDLEY
REALLY? Would you be willing to rig crime scene evidence to support a prosecuting attorney's working hypothesis?

Exley doesn't answer. Dudley smiles.

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

Exley glares. Laughing, Dudley brushes by, limps toward the gathering policemen.

DUDLEY
Are you willing to shoot hardened criminals in the back to offset the chance they'll --

The SHOTGUN BELCHES flame. Dudley goes down, shot in the back. Exley drops the gun, raises his hands over his head.

DISSOLVE TO:

L.A. MONTAGE
"RAGS TO RICHES" PLAYS.

EXT. ROSE BOWL PARADE - DAY

Riding in a convertible, waving to the crowds is the Grand Marshal -- the new Vice President, a young Richard Nixon.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

A midnight assembly. The Chief, D.A. Loew and several high ranking brass. Their attention riveted THROUGH the one-way glass into...

INT. ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Bloody, exhausted, Exley sits across from two INTERNAL AFFAIRS DETECTIVES.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS #1
You have a lot of explaining to do, Lieutenant.
EXLEY

Yes. I do.

As Exley begins...

TELEVISION SCREEN

Where we're informed that tonight's episode of "Badge of Honor" is: "Dedicated to the memory of technical advisor Sergeant Jack Vincennes."

EXT. VENTURA FREEWAY - CAHUENGA PASS - DAY

A ribbon is cut. Eager motorists roll down the blacktop.

EXT. GRAUMAN'S CHINESE THEATER - DAY

Ronald Reagan applauds as Jane Wyman plunges her hands into fresh sidewalk cement.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

The brass exchange concerned looks and raised eyebrows as they watch Exley THROUGH the glass, his VOICE heard OVER the SPEAKERS.

INT. UNION STATION - DAY

The Flatnose Frisco loan shark and Cauliflowered Cleveland enforcer seen earlier at the Victory Motel return to L.A., ready to fill the vacuum.

EXT. NEWSSTAND - DAY

Hush-Hush is delivered. The headline: "Actor Reynolds in his Final Role: Conductor of the Night Train to Slice City."

INT. ROOM #1 - NIGHT

Exley stares across at the Internal Affairs Detectives.

EXLEY

That's it. That's the whole story.

As Exley looks to the gray-tinted wall mirror...
LOEW leans over, whispers to the Chief.

LOEW
The press would have a field day with this.

CHIEF
(a beat)
When in doubt, feed them a hero.
In this case, we'll need more than one.

CUT TO:

LOS ANGELES EXAMINER HEADLINE:

R.I.P. DUDLEY SMITH
Fabled L.A. Cop Dies Defending City from Organized Crime!

INT. LAPD HEADQUARTERS - BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

Exley in his dress blue uniform. The Chief smiles, pins gold stars to his shoulders.

CHIEF
Captain Edmund Exley. Chief of Detectives. Los Angeles Police Department.

Applause. Flashbulbs. Lynn watches from the back as Exley runs a handshake gauntlet. Finally, he spots her. She's returned to her natural brunette. Looks even better. Exley steps over.

EXLEY
(ironic smile)
I tried to throw it all away and they give it back in spades.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Exley walks Lynn out.

EXLEY
Where will you go?

LYNN
Bisbee, Arizona. The air's good for pensioners and I know where everything is.
When?

Right now, before I back down.

Where is he?

Lynn gestures ahead. They walk to her car. She opens the back door. Bud's in the back. Braces on his legs, head sutured. Jaw wired shut and tubes running in and out. But his hands still look strong. Bud forces a smile through the wires, tries to say something, but can't.

Thanks for the push.

Exley takes his hand. Bud squeezes till both men wince.

You just did what you did. No rank, no glory.

Exley slips his Medal of Valor into Bud's hand.

From me to you. It'll mean something if it's yours.

Bud takes it, turns away so Exley won't see the tears.

We should go now.

As Exley steps back, Lynn closes the door. PARTY noises drift from upstairs. Exley looks to Lynn.

Do you think I ever could've been in the running?

Some men get the world. Others get ex-hookers and a trip to Arizona.

A beat. Exley wishes he'd gotten the trip to Arizona. She kisses him on the cheek, gets in the CAR. STARTS it.

Exley looks back at Bud. Bud presses his hands to the glass. Exley touches his side, palms half the man's size. Hands against hands.
The car moves. A turn into traffic, a good-bye TOOT on the HORN. Exley's all alone. As he watches them go...

FADE TO BLACK.

THE END