

# "HARDCORE"

Screenplay by

Paul Schrader

SHOOTING DRAFT

FADE IN:

## CREDITS

Credits are played over Currier and Ives-like winter scenes from life in Grand Rapids. It's Christmas morning.

- Two well-bundled youths shovel out a suburban driveway while their father scrapes ice off the family car.
- Youths pelt a passing car with snowballs. Others, more daring companions, grab onto the car's rear bumper and hitch a free ride across the icy roads and past a sign which reads "Grand Rapids City Limits."
- Christmas decorations hang from the lamp posts on Monroe Avenue.
- Children, dressed in bright parkas, and breathing steam, compare their Christmas presents: sleds, skis and a toboggan. In the b.g., other children speed down Richmond Park Hill.
- A woman's distant voice sings an old hymn:

"Precious memories, unseen angels,  
Sent from somewhere to my soul,  
How they linger ever near me,  
And the sacred past unfolds.  
Precious memories, how they linger,  
How they ever flood my soul,  
In the stillness of the midnight,  
Precious sacred scenes unfold.  
Precious father, loving mother,  
Fly across the lonely years,  
And old home scenes of my childhood

In fond memories appear."

END CREDITS.

INT. VAN DORN HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Four generations of the Van Dorn family have gathered at the family home.

A long kitchen leads to the dining area, then to the spacious living room.

The house is perhaps one hundred years old; deeply varnished woodwork and patterned yellow wallpaper section off the walls.

Apart from several recent tasteless acquisitions (an E-Z Boy lounge chair to replace the old Queen Anne which broke two Easters ago), the house remains furnished in the style of the previous century. The old dining room table, which Grandfather Van Dorn built because he was too cheap to buy one, has now become a priceless antique.

The rooms are littered with religious calendars, Bibles and plaster-of-Paris plaques bearing such sentiments as "As For Me and My House, We Will Serve the Lord." The oak buffet is laden with similar religious knickknacks and chintz. Framed, tinted photographs of the family patriarchs are indiscriminately mixed with newer snapshots of proud fathers and high school graduates.

The house radiates a sense of continuity. Generations come and go; the family remains. All of life's "old home scenes" have been played out here: births, deaths, romances, blasphemies, betrayals. And now the air is again alive with the sounds of playing children, busy housewives and bickering uncles.

The kitchen is crowded with mothers, daughters and aunts. Each has brought a special dish. ANNE DE JONG (nee Van Dorn), thirty-five, supervises the final preparations. One aunt shows another snapshots of her new grandchild.

JAKE VAN DORN, forty, and his brother JOE, fifty, sit at the table watching the kitchen activity.

The house echoes with small talk:

AUNT

...He got accepted at Grand Valley,  
but he'd rather go to Michigan...

NEPHEW #1

...Get that pink rot...

NEPHEW #2

...No way Uncle Joe talk me into  
cutting celery again this summer.  
Rather work in the car wash.

As the CAMERA TRACKS THROUGH the dining room, it passes a cluster of men standing near the buffet. WES DE JONG and JOHN VAN DORN, both about forty, casually discuss a theological point with GRANDFATHER VAN DORN. Across the table, a young boy, about eleven, listens with rapt awe.

These are men of the soil. Their faces are sun-blotched and weather-beaten. Wes has rolled up the sleeves of his white shirt; John has switched to a more comfortable plaid.

JOHN

...I still say that if a man has  
committed the unpardonable sin, he  
knows he has.

Grandfather nods head approvingly.

WES

I don't know about that, John. It  
don't seem to account much for God's  
grace.

JOHN

What kind of grace do you mean,  
universal or specific...?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

A long line of folding tables have been set up in the

basement. A mixed assortment of chairs can accommodate thirty or more persons. A pre-teen daughter helps her mother place dishes and silverware on the tablecloths. Evergreen branches and red candles decorate the tables.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DEN - DAY

Most of the teenagers have crowded into what was once called the study, but is now the "television room." KRISTEN VAN DORN, fourteen, and MARSHA DE JONG, fifteen, are scrunched onto the sofa. Kristen has long blonde hair, a clean Dutch complexion and an unaffected beauty. The girls' legs are innocently wrapped around each other's.

JOE, forty-five, another of the Van Dorn brothers, and a male cousin about nineteen, are also squeezed on the sofa. Young children squat on the floor in front of them. All are watching some inane Christmas variety show.

Joe, bored of this tripe, gets up and turns off the set. The children wail in unison. "Aw, c'mon, Uncle Joe."

JOE

I'm sick of watching this television stuff. You know who makes it? All the kids who couldn't get along here. They go out to California and make television. I didn't like 'em when they were here, and I don't like 'em out there.

One of the youngsters reaches over and snaps the set back on as Joe leaves the room.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

As Joe leaves the den, he passes Jake Van Dorn and Wes De Jong. Unlike his older brother, Jake is not a man of the soil. He has been to college and runs his own business. He looks well-groomed and comfortable in his navy suit, white shirt and striped tie. Wes is Jake's brother-in-law and

friend. They get along well enough.

JOE

(to Jake and Wes)

Television. If you don't buy one yourself, the kids go someplace else and watch. And what do they sell on television? More televisions.

JAKE

(light)

They got to make their money, too, Joe. Give the kids a break. It's Christmas.

Joe shrugs and walks into the dining room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Anne listens as NADINE, her sister-in-law, about forty, and RUTH, her niece, about twenty, help her set out celery and carrot stalks.

RUTH

...and they hadn't heard a word from him before he died.

Three children, BILL, LENARD and JANE, ages six to ten, walk over to the three mothers. Lenard, six years old, wears a blanket over his head in mock Biblical dress.

BILL

Aunt Ruth, can we use Timmy for the Nativity play? We need him to play the Christ-child.

RUTH

But Timmy's only six months old.

BILL

We won't hurt him. I'm going to be Joseph, Jane's Mary and Lenard will be one of the shepherds.

Bill looks at blanket-headed Lenard, who has no idea of what's going on.

RUTH

I don't think so...

NADINE

You can't do that. That's blasphemy.  
If anybody pretends to be Christ,  
it's blasphemy.

BILL

But he's only a baby.

Anne nods in agreement. Bill seems disappointed.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Jake and West stand with their arms around their respective daughters, Kristen and Marsha. The girls squirm and giggle politely.

JAKE

(teasing Marsha)

Your dad and I aren't sure you and  
Kristen should go on the YC Convention  
tomorrow.

KRISTEN

Oh, Dad.

Wes plays along:

WES

I don't know, Kristen, that's a long  
trip to be on a bus with all those  
boys.

MARSHA

You mean those creeps.

KRISTEN

There are more chaperones than boys  
anyway.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

Every family is in place. The social order is complete: grandfather, parents, children, grandchildren. The long table is stacked high with salads, casseroles, and vegetables.

The diners turn their heads toward Jake who stands at the far end of the table, his closed fists pressed against the tabletop. He lowers his head in prayer.

One of the mothers, looking at her son, Lenard, quickly pulls the blanket off his head.

The CAMERA TRACKS ACROSS the table toward Jake.

JAKE

We thank the Lord for bringing this family together at graduation time.  
We ask Thee to watch over this family and keep us together in the coming year.

CUT TO:

EXT. JAKE'S HOUSE - MORNING

Two cars are parked in the driveway of Van Dorn's suburban ranch-style home.

CUT TO:

INT. KRISTEN'S ROOM - MORNING

Marsha sits on the bed as Kristen finishes packing her suitcase.

The items include: a bright red sweater, jeans, underclothes, Tampax, and a Bible.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING AREA - MORNING

Jake, Wes and Anne wait in the spotless dining area. Harold Jay looks in the refrigerator.

JAKE

(to Anne)

Sis, would you check if Kristen has everything packed?

Anne nods and walks into the bedroom.

WES

You want to go for coffee after we send the girls off?

JAKE

No. Thanks anyway. I've got to get over to the office.

WES

Anne wants to make sure you come over for dinner Sunday. With Kristen gone you'll be all alone.

Jake nods.

Kristen, wearing a light blue sweater and skirt, emerges from the bedroom. She smiles demurely.

Her suitcase is in her hand. Jake, for a moment, feels a sharp twinge of loss. A foreboding of the day when Kristen, fully grown, will leave his house for good.

CUT TO:

EXT. TWELFTH ST. CHURCH - DAY

Parents watch their children board a snow-covered bus outside Twelfth St. Church. A banner across the side of the bus reads:

YOUNG CALVINIST CONVENTION

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH. – BELLFLOWER, CALIF.

Most of the parents, working folk long accustomed to the

brutal Michigan winters, wear heavy overcoats, bearskin caps, fur-lined gloves and galoshes.

Jake, bare-headed and wearing a thin topcoat over his suit, waits with Kristen, Marsha, Wes and Anne. Harold Jay pelts the side of the bus with a snowball.

MRS. STEENSMA, one of the trip counselors, reads off the youngsters' names as they board the bus:

MRS. STEENSMA  
...Daverman, DeBeer, DeBoer, DeJong,  
DeVries...

Marsha kisses her parents goodbye and heads toward the bus.

MRS. STEENSMA  
(continuing)  
...Vander Ark, Vander Hoven, Vander  
Keen, Van Dorn, Van Dyke, E., Van  
Dyke, S...

When Kristen hears her name she starts toward the bus, then stops, comes back and gives her father a farewell kiss.

JAKE  
Take care of yourself, Kristen. I  
love you.

KRISTEN  
I will, Daddy.

JAKE  
If you need anything, just call.

Later, amid horn-honking and farewells, the bus pulls away from the curb and heads down the snowy street.

INT. BUS - DAY

A sigh of relief goes up from the adolescent conventioners: wheew! There are a few isolated cries of "We're on our way!"

A teenager instantly flips on his transistor RADIO to metal ROCK. Once away from home, these kids, like all kids, are

the children of 1976. The old family glue doesn't hold. They live in the world of rock and television.

CUT TO:

INT. FACTORY - DAY

Workmen fashion table legs on a wood lathe. In another part of the factory, laborers assemble chair frames.

Jake walks along the assembly line with MARY, a well-dressed, attractive employee about twenty-five. They turn a corner and step into a display area where a set features the Van Dorn Co.'s new modular office designs.

Mary shows Jake the set for his approval.

JAKE

Is this all the display space we can get?

MARY

I tried to get more, but this is the limit. The De Vries line has the same area.

Mary is a cool, efficient display designer. Jake studies a patch of bright blue on the right wall.

JAKE

What do you think of this... ah, shade of blue, Mary.

MARY

I like it, Mr. Van Dorn.

JAKE

Don't you think it's a little too... bright?

MARY

Not really. But if you want me to tone it down...

JAKE

No, no. I wouldn't hire a display designer if I didn't trust her taste. Maybe we should bring in more of that shade. Perhaps a stripe across the back wall.

He gestures.

Gently, relentlessly, Jake manipulates Mary. He does not wish to impose his taste on her but, through calculated argument, will get her to accept his views. It's only a matter of time before he wears her down.

MARY

No, that would be much too overpowering.

JAKE

Yeah, overpowering. That was the word I was looking for.

MARY

(sensing his ploy)

Mr. Van Dorn, I've worked on the color scheme for weeks. I think it's just right.

JAKE

What's that shade of blue called?

MARY

Pavonine. It's the same tint as the stripe in the fabric.

Jake bends down and examines the chair.

JAKE

Are you still going with that fella that teaches at Grand Valley?

MARY

Sam?

JAKE

Yeah. He's a nice guy. Don't lose

him. Maybe we could tone down this stripe a bit. It's a little...

MARY  
(catching on)  
Overpowering?

JAKE  
Yeah.

MARY  
(gives in)  
Okay, Mr. Van Dorn, I think we could knock that Pavonine blue a bit.

JAKE  
Are you sure it's all right?

MARY  
Yes. I think it'll look better.

JAKE  
If you say so.

Mary watches him a moment and thinks.

MARY  
Kristen went on that convention today, didn't she?

JAKE  
(mildly surprised)  
Yeah. How did you know?

CUT TO:

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jake lies in bed, sleeping. Blue light falls across his face. He is dreaming.

CUT TO:

EXT. BELLFLOWER CHURCH - DAY

A row of church buses are parked in the lot of First Christian Reformed Church, Bellflower, California.

They have come from the various other Christian Reformed communities around the country: Zeeland, Michigan, Midland Park, New Jersey, Sioux Center, Iowa, Ripon, California.

Clusters of youths sit on the church steps and spacious lawns.

CUT TO:

INT. MEETING ROOM - DAY

A hand-lettered poster on an easel reads: "Today's Topic: Doctrine – Relevant or Old-Fashioned?"

A slight, pretty GIRL about fifteen stands up before the discussion group. She wears an Elton John T-shirt and name tag. She holds her Bible with both hands.

GIRL

Even though the doctrinal standards were written a long time ago, I think they are more relevant than ever. Especially in this age of permissiveness and "anything goes..."

CUT TO:

EXT. BELLFLOWER CHURCH - DAY

Kristen and Marsha stand near a tree. Kristen is wearing her red sweater and jeans.

Nearby, a group of boys sit in a circle on the grass telling jokes and listening to metal rock on a transistor radio.

KRISTEN

You going to Knott's Berry Farm with him?

MARSHA

He asked me. You going with anybody?

KRISTEN

(shrugs)  
I don't know.

MARSHA  
You ever play Chicken?

KRISTEN  
What's that?

MARSHA  
(teasing)  
You never heard of that?

KRISTEN  
Com'on, tell me.

MARSHA  
Well, a boy goes like this, see.

Using her finger, Marsha traces a looping oval around Kristen's right breast, starting at the neck, working down to the midriff, and back up her left side.

KRISTEN  
What does that do?

MARSHA  
Well, each time he comes in closer,  
like this.

Marsha traces another circle inside the first one. She draws a narrowing spiral around Kristen's breast.

MARSHA  
(continuing)  
He keeps coming closer until you say  
"Chicken." Then he stops.

The girls giggle.

KRISTEN  
You and Jerry do that?

Mrs. Steensma steps out onto the lawn and calls to Kristen and Marsha:

MRS. STEENSMA  
Kristen, Marsha! Time for your  
discussion group.

MARSHA  
(grudgingly)  
Oh, all right.

MRS. STEENSMA  
And put your name tags back on.

The girls pull their name tags out of their jeans and clip them on as they walk back toward the church.

CUT TO:

INT. TWELFTH STREET CHURCH

REVEREND VANTIL, a stately man about fifty, stands at the pulpit. The front of the church is plain and stark, adorned only by a large wooden cross.

The Christian Reformed Church is not one which believes in emotional appeals or confessions. It is a religion of scripture, creed and doctrine. Reverend Vantil, dressed in black, addresses the congregation as if he were a businessman. And his business is sin, guilt and redemption.

He speaks calmly and powerfully. The church echoes with the weight of his words:

REV. VANTIL  
...our study of the Heidelberg  
Catechism, reading today Lords Day  
number one, question and answer one  
and two:  
(reads)  
Q: What is your only comfort in life  
and death? A: That I, body and soul,  
both in life and death, am not my  
own but belong unto my faithful Savior  
Jesus Christ. Q: How many things are  
necessary to know to live and die  
happily? A: Three: the first, how

great my sin and misery are; the second, how I am delivered from all my sin and misery; the third, how I am to be thankful to God for such deliverance.

Later. The CAMERA TRACKS UP the aisle as the congregation rises to sing the doxology. Jake stands with his sister and brother-in-law.

CUT TO:

EXT. TWELFTH STREET CHURCH - DAY

The parishioners, fighting off the winter cold, work their way to their cars.

CUT TO:

INT. DE JONG HOME - DAY

Jake, Wes, Anne and Harold Jay pass dishes around the De Jong's dining room.

ANNE

...as soon as the service starts,  
the ushers all go off to Big Boy's  
and have coffee...

The PHONE RINGS.

ANNE

(continuing)

I'll get it.

(gets up)

So that when someone like Mrs. Van  
Dorn in a wheelchair needs some help  
there's nobody there.

She walks into the living room. After a moment, Anne walks back into the room.

ANNE

(continuing)

It's for you, Jake.

Van Dorn excuses himself, walks into the living room and answers the phone. His VOICE can be HEARD in the background

ANNE

(continuing)

Well, I just hope I don't get old and in a wheelchair and have to depend on the ushers to help me out of church.

(to Harold Jay)

You would never let that happen to your mother, would you?

Harold Jay nods and keeps eating. He's used to this.

A moment later, Jake, his face drained of color, walks back into the room.

WES

What is it, Jake?

JAKE

Wes, Anne, come here a moment.

Wes and Anne step into the living room.

JAKE

That was Mrs. Steensma calling from California.

(a beat)

Kristen's disappeared.

ANNE

Kristen?

WES

What happened?

JAKE

They don't know. They were having some recreation deal out at Knott's Berry Farm and Kristen wasn't there when they got back to the bus and they couldn't find her.

ANNE

Have they called the police?

JAKE

Yeah.

WES

Is Marsha there?

JAKE

Yeah. She's quite upset. I'm going to fly out today. They want me to bring some pictures.

WES

I'll come with you. Let me pack some things.

He starts to walk away.

CUT TO:

EXT. L.A. INTERNATIONAL - DAY

A United Jet lands. Marsha's VOICE is HEARD from the following scene.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLFLOWER HOME - DAY

Jake and Wes sit near Marsha. Mrs. Steensma stands nearby.

MARSHA

...They have a ride called "The Great White Knuckler", a roller coaster. Last time I saw Kristen was standing over there...

WES

Why was she alone?

He looks at Mrs. Steensma. Marsha is hiding something: She was off necking when Kristen disappeared.

JAKE

Was she alone?

MARSHA

I told this to the policeman.

MRS. STEENSMA

They had met an older boy earlier.

MARSHA

But she wasn't with him when I saw her last.

MRS. STEENSMA

She tried to give the officers a description. It was nothing out of the ordinary.

CUT TO:

INT. L.A. POLICE DEPARTMENT - DAY

DETECTIVE BURROWS, of Missing Persons, carries Kristen's picture and a form Jake has filled out into the "Runaway Room". Jake and Wes follow.

One long wall is covered with tacked-up snapshots of persons (mostly young) the police are looking for. Each snapshot is attached to a small form listing the missing person's name, age, home and so forth. A sign above the photo montage reads: "Have you seen this person?"

Burrows tacks up Kristen's picture on the Missing Persons wall.

BURROWS

The boy your daughter was talking to didn't work at the park. We've interviewed everybody there.

JAKE

But is she, has...

BURROWS

There's no evidence of any foul play at present. I hope she's just a runaway.

JAKE

There's something wrong here. Kristen is not the type of girl to just up and leave.

BURROWS

I said I hope she's a runaway. Better that than she just disappears like so many others do. Sometimes they turn up years later, sometimes not. A lot of crimes go unreported, unknown. These are realities.

JAKE

What are you doing?

BURROWS

Two officers have been assigned to the case. I can't keep them on indefinitely, but we'll go through every lead.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Another day, Jake and Wes, wearing different clothes, walk with ANDY MAST, a private investigator, down an L.A. street.

They walk silently, Mast, forty, a stocky man in a wrinkled suit, looks like he's been up all night. He probably has.

Mast motions to a coffee shop and they enter.

CUT TO:

INT. COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Mast, slouching in the booth, sips his coffee.

MAST

Those cops, like all cops, are intelligent enough, but they are masters of de-ductive reason. That is, you ask them what three and two are they'll tell you five, but if you ask them what five is, they go blank. That's spec-u-lative reasoning, and that's where I come in.

JAKE

Well, what do they know?

MAST

Dogshit. Worse yet, they don't care.

JAKE

So then, Mr. Mast...

MAST

Andy.

JAKE

...What do you have to offer?

MAST

Let me ask you a personal question, a painful one. The first of many. Tell me, was your daughter the kind of girl to run around, to, ah, play practical jokes, maybe?

Van Dorn answers him with a cold stare.

MAST

(continuing)

No, I didn't think she was. Let me get the picture here. Let me guess. She was an absolutely clean girl, a model daughter, she never had rebellious or impure thoughts, she didn't fuck around...

JAKE

If I was you, Mr. Mast, I'd watch my language.

MAST

Hey, I'm a private detective, Van Dorn, you want to hire a choir boy you can go back to Grand Rapids. I've been to that scumbag town. It's full of them.

JAKE

(cold)

Who's paying you?

MAST

You are.

JAKE

That's right.

MAST

(backtracks)

As I was saying, I'll pick up the thread. There's a number of ways I can go. There's not much you can do here. Stay if you want. Maybe it'd be better if you went back home. Go through Kristen's personal stuff. Ask around, maybe she knew somebody out here.

(a beat)

Look, I do this a lot. I work at a minimum rate of \$750.00 a week. It may seem like a lot of money to you, but it ain't. You could hire cheaper.

JAKE

And better?

MAST

I suppose. But I'll tell you, Jake, I'm like a little animal. When I get my teeth into something I never let go. If your daughter's here, I'll track her down.

CUT TO:

## MONTAGE

- Jake sits at his desk, staring into empty space.
- Jake looks through his wife's personal effects in the bureau. The room is unchanged.
- Jake, his arms folded, stands outside church. A fellow parishioner is speaking to him; Jake doesn't seem to be listening.

Mast's VOICE comes over a long distance connection:

MAST (V.O.)

Pilgrim, this is Andy. I'm in Phoenix.

(a beat)

Yeah, it looks that way. I don't know why. I'm going south, then maybe fly over to Nogales.

(a beat)

I think so.

(a beat)

Yeah, I picked up your check at Western Union.

- Jake gets out of his car and looks down the street of a strange town. A nearby sign reads: Minneapolis National Trust.
- Jake walks into a greasy spoon. Ahead of him, her back turned, sits a girl who looks like Kristen. She turns as he approaches; it is another girl, another runaway. He apologizes and walks away.

OVER this SCENE, we HEAR Van Dorn's telephoned VOICE:

JAKE (V.O.)

No, I was up in Minneapolis. Somebody responded to my ad. Said there was a girl who looked like Kristen there.

But it wasn't her. The police haven't found anything?

(a beat)

It don't look good. I don't know. Maybe she's dead already.

CUT TO:

EXT. DE JONG HOME - DAY

Spring has returned to Grand Rapids. The maples are in bloom and the chairs have been set out on the long porch of Wes De Jong's house.

We HEAR Mast's telephone VOICE as Jake gets out of his car and enters the house.

MAST (V.O.)

I took a side trip to Mexico City.  
It was just a long shot, but it didn't  
pay off. So I'm back in L.A.  
(a beat)  
Yeah, the money came on time.

CUT TO:

INT. DE JONG HOME - DAY

Jake, carrying a wrapped present, walks into the kitchen. Anne, Joe and John, sitting around the table, greet him as he enters. A large birthday cake sits in the center of the table.

Jake says, "Hi, Sis," and nods to the others.

JAKE

Where's Marsha?

ANNE

(calling)  
Marsha!

Marsha walks in, smiling when she sees her uncle:

MARSHA

Uncle Jake.

JAKE

(gives her present)  
Happy birthday, Marsha.

CUT TO:

EXT. DE JONG FRONT PORCH - DAY

Jake and Joe sit on chairs on the porch. Wes and Willem rest on the rickety swing. All are drinking coffee, finishing pieces of birthday cake and enjoying a fine spring Sunday.

Harold Jay watches quietly from the railing.

JOE

(sets down plate)

Spring's early. Without a frost we'll have a good year.

WES

Not as good as last.

JOHN

Lord's been good to us.

Across the street, two junior high boys, pushing their bikes, follow two female classmates. The girls dressed in tight halters and shorts try to ignore them.

JOE

Never had to make a dishonest dollar in my life. Never cheated an employee.

WES

How could you? They're all your relatives.

He laughs.

JOE

The Lord got his share, too.

Joe gets up to refill his coffee cup. Wes turns to Jake, who is watching the couples across the street.

WES

How's your business, Jake?

JAKE  
(absentminded)  
Pretty good.

WES  
You should come around more often.  
You haven't been around for weeks.  
Anne complains she doesn't see you  
anymore.

Jake, looking away, doesn't answer. Wes contemplates something he's been planning to say.

WES  
(continuing)  
You can't dwell on Kristen all the  
time, Jake. Sometimes we can't  
understand the Lord's ways. He is  
testing you. You have to have faith.

Jake turns and looks back at Wes:

JAKE  
Would you?  
(a beat)  
Could you?

He looks away again.

CUT TO:

INT. JAKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Jake is at his desk when the PHONE RINGS. He picks up the receiver.

JAKE  
Hello?

MAST (O.S.)  
Mr. Van Dorn?

JAKE  
Mast?

MAST (O.S.)

Yeah.

JAKE

Where are you? The connection sounds very good.

MAST (O.S.)

I'm back in Grand Rapids.

JAKE

In G.R.? Why?

MAST (O.S.)

Can you meet me in about an hour? At the Pantlind Hotel?

JAKE

I've got a meeting...

MAST (O.S.)

What are you paying me for?

JAKE

I'll be there.

CUT TO:

EXT. DOWNTOWN GRAND RAPIDS - DAY

Jake and Mast walk out of the Pantlind and walk up Monroe Avenue. The heart of Grand Rapids, like that of many Mid-western cities, is a ghost town. The major businesses have one by one gone broke or moved out to the suburban malls, leaving the core of the city to cut-rate stores, parking lots and federally-subsidized government buildings.

MAST

This used to be a real city. I was here about fifteen years ago. Embezzlement case. It was always a little religious for my taste, but at least it was a city. With a downtown and all.

JAKE

What have you found out?

MAST

I've got some news. Your daughter's all right. At least I think she is.

JAKE

Where is she?

MAST

I don't know.

JAKE

What do you mean?

MAST

Have you ever seen any, ah, pornographic movies, Jake?

JAKE

No.

MAST

Do you know what a "hardcore" movie is?

JAKE

That's like a stag film.

MAST

Yeah. You ever seen any of those?

JAKE

No.

MAST

They're legal now.

JAKE

They are?

MAST

Yeah.

(a beat)

All over. Even here in Grand Rapids.

JAKE

Hmm.

MAST

There's a little stall theatre up here.

(gestures)

It's closed now, but I'm borrowing it for an hour. I think there's something you'd better see.

INT. THEATRE - DAY

Jake is uncomfortably seated in the dingy thirty-seat theatre. Mast walks back from the projection booth as the film starts.

He sits next to Van Dorn. We slowly TRACK INTO Jake's face as the color drains from it. O.S. We HEAR groans and the sounds of flesh on flesh.

We TRACK SLOWLY INTO the film itself:

A 16mm hardcore short on a simple, but classic theme – rape. Two young men force a young, unwilling girl to submit to their desires. The girl – Kristen – nude, tries to get out of a wrinkled bed but is restrained by the long arm of a languid, long-haired nude youth. Another young man, wearing only pink elastic shorts, steps into the frame and takes Kristen into his arms.

The quality of the action is quite low; the young men posture and overact in the manner of high school dramatics. Occasionally, the action stops while the actors receive cues from an off-screen director. Grunts and groans are dubbed into the screen action.

Only Kristen's performance lends a note of credibility to the proceedings. She is genuinely disoriented or frightened – or both. She's not play acting.

For one frightening moment, Kristen, regaining full consciousness, fights back, but the youth in pink shorts slaps her into submission. Her eyes turn pleadingly toward

the camera.

The first youth laughs and takes Kristen into his arms. The youth in the pink shorts kneels on the edge of the bed and instructs Kristen to remove his shorts. As she begins to do this, the first youth fucks her from the rear.

As the film ends, Jake sinks his head into his hands, speaking to himself. It's almost as if we're hearing his thoughts:

JAKE

It can't be. Why me? What have I done?

Looking up, he says softly, then louder:

JAKE

(continuing)

Turn it off.

(a beat)

Turn it off.

(a beat)

Turn it off!

(a beat)

Turn it off!

Only then does Jake realize that the film has already been shut off and he's sitting alone in the quiet theatre.

Mast stands by the exit. Jake gets up and walks toward him.

CUT TO:

INT. LOBBY

Jake catches up with Mast in the small lobby.

JAKE

(aggressively)

Where is she?

MAST

I don't know.

JAKE

Where did you get that film?

Jake backs Mast from one side of the lobby to the other.

MAST

I bought it at a store in L.A.

JAKE

Who made it?

MAST

I don't know.

JAKE

What do you mean?

Mast calms him down.

MAST

Wait. Slow down. A film like this, 16mm, cost two three hundred dollars, sold outright, shown in peep machines, maybe theatres, maybe not, is almost impossible to track. 'Nobody' makes it; 'nobody' shows it; 'nobody' sees it. It's like it doesn't even exist.

JAKE

What's it called?

MAST

It was called 'Slave of Love' when I bought it. Next time it's sold, it'll be called something else.

JAKE

But the police...

MAST

The police? They know less than you do.

JAKE

Do you think she's safe?

MAST  
Yeah. Probably.

JAKE  
You like this, don't you. Showing  
me... this.

MAST  
I hate it. But you gotta know, buddy.  
(thinks)  
A lot of strange things happen in  
this world. Things you don't know  
about in Grand Rapids. Things you  
don't want to know about. Doors that  
should never be opened. I've known  
more about this sort of thing than a  
man should. Don't ask me why.

Jake turns away.

MAST  
(continuing)  
I'm going back to L.A. today. I'll  
track this film down, if I can. I'll  
find her. But I can't make any  
promises. I don't know what she'll  
be like when I find her.

Jake, pale, looks away. Mast attempts to give him a comforting  
embrace. Jake pushes him away.

CUT TO:

INT. JAKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Van Dorn sleeps fitfully. Blue light falls across his  
contorted body. He's dreaming again.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLLYWOOD MOTEL - DAY

A sleazy Santa Monica Boulevard motel.

CUT TO:

## INT. HOLLYWOOD MOTEL - DAY

A porn film is being shot in a tacky motel room furnished with a pink circular water bed, a lime-brown shag rug, and peeling red felt wallpaper. An oil painting of a seagull in flight adds a touch of class.

The small set is crowded with technicians and onlookers. The harried collegiate filmmakers wear scruffy jeans and T-shirts. The onlookers, more refined, sport double knit suits.

Two girls and a middle-aged man lie on the pink satin sheets. Beach towels protect them from the unheated water bed. One of the girls, NIKI, has a long blonde wig and looks about nineteen.

The makeup girl hurriedly dabs some last minute cosmetic on the second girl's breast. A young man in a UCLA T-shirt pastes up the peeling wallpaper above the bed.

Random VOICES ECHO around the set. The DIRECTOR, a student filmmaker, tries to bring the set to order.

BILL RAMADA, 40, the Producer, watches silently from the b.g. He's in charge here. He wears gabardine slacks and a Gucci shirt.

His Assistant, KURT, 25, stands by his side.

RAMADA

(clapping hands)

All right, kids, let's get back to it.

DIRECTOR

Actors, to your positions, please.

Niki, the SECOND GIRL and the Actor remove their towels and form a contorted triangular position.

NIKI

Can't you get this bed any warmer?

CAMERAMAN

Bring another light over here.

NIKI

My ass is freezing.

ACTOR

Your ass is always freezing.

NIKI

Up yours.

The Second Girl coaxes her male partner into tumescence.

SECOND GIRL

He's got it up.

NIKI

Thank God.

DIRECTOR

Action. Rolling.

CAMERAMAN

The wallpaper's peeling again.

DIRECTOR

Forget it. Keep shooting.

Crouching, the Director approaches his actors.

DIRECTOR

(continuing)

All right, Niki, you come around  
this way and swing your legs around  
his back.

The Director pleads with outstretched hands. His acting workshop courses have not been in vain. Lowering his voice, he coaxes Niki into the proper mood:

DIRECTOR

(continuing)

All right, Niki, you're lying back  
now, yes, just taking it easy, just  
enjoying your body, yes, you're

thinking about your father, your  
mind is open and free...

Mast walks into the rear of the room and looks around until  
he spots Ramada.

DIRECTOR

(continuing)

Okay, now Bennie, you turn over and  
lick her belly...

Ramada recognizes Mast as he walks toward him and motions  
for him to follow.

They step into an adjoining room. The Director's instructions  
drone in the distance.

RAMADA

(friendly)

Hey, piss-head, what brings you  
around?

MAST

You don't have to get uppity with  
me, Bill. I remember when you was  
running that car wash and couldn't  
make it go. And what was that other  
thing you tried? A Dairy Queen? Went  
busted too.

RAMADA

At least I improved myself. What's  
up?

Mast takes out a snapshot of Kristen. In the background the  
Director yells, "Cut."

MAST

I want you to take a look at this  
girl here. She's been in some porn  
stuff.

RAMADA

(looks at photo)

No, Andy. Don't know the kid.

MAST

Look again, Billy-boy. This is jail  
bait. Could get you in a lotta  
trouble.

RAMADA

(shakes head)

Nope never saw her before.

(calls to assistant)

Kurt, come over here. Don't use  
underage kids. Wouldn't touch 'em  
for all the cow shit in Mexico.

(as Kurt steps over)

You recognize this piece of wool,  
Kurt?

KURT

(shakes head)

No.

RAMADA

Sorry couldn't help you, Andy.

(to Kurt)

How'd the shot go? They about ready  
to start again?

(to Mast)

You can come watch if you want, Andy.  
Just don't hassle anybody.

Mast shrugs, tucks the photo in his pocket and follows Ramada  
and Kurt back onto the set.

CUT TO:

EXT. FACTORY - DAY

Jake leaves the factory in the middle of the afternoon, gets  
in his car and drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Jake walks into his bedroom, pulls a suitcase out of the

closet and throws it on the bed.

He is motivated now. A decision has been made.

He throws in his shirts and socks. A travel clock. Pictures of Kristen.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Jake is on the phone. His voice is hard and determined.

JAKE

This is Jake. I'm going out of town for a while.

(a beat)

No, I don't know when I'll be back.

No, there's nothing wrong. Can you keep things running?

(a beat)

Don't ask.

CUT TO:

EXT. L.A. INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - NIGHT

United jet lands.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOLIDAY INN - DAY

Van Dorn, dressed and ready to go, walks out of the Hollywood Holiday Inn and over to the parking lot.

Checking a city map one final time, he gets into his late model rented green Pontiac and drives off.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DAY

Jake seems a new man; he's in charge now. To a man like Jake Van Dorn, a man from the Midwest, a self-made man, all is

possible once you're in control. There are no ambiguities, no conundrums, no labyrinths; only problems. And problems, once understood, lead only to solutions.

All one needs is the will and the intellect to pursue those solutions.

Jake looks at the note pad on the seat. It reads:

Andy Mast  
Apt. #3-A  
14316 Chandler Blvd.,  
Van Nuys, Calif.  
(213) 474-8759

He drives up Highland, past the freeway and over the hills.

CUT TO:

EXT. MAST'S APARTMENT - DAY

Van Dorn parks in front of the Elite V Apartments.

Jake stops in front of the room, re-checks the number, and knocks.

There's no immediate answer. Hearing some commotion in the room, Jake stops, listens. He peeks through the partially-curtained window.

Inside, he sees Mast banging away with a TEENAGE GIRL on the sofa.

Jake is curious, then outraged. He tries the door. It opens.

Inside, Mast and his teenage companion scramble for their clothes. The girl calls out.

TEENAGE GIRL (O.S.)

It's the cops, man.

MAST (O.S.)

Fuck.

INT. MAST'S APARTMENT - DAY

Jake strides into Mast's apartment.

Mast, his belt unbuckled, puts on his shirt. The Teenage Girl, pulling a Grateful Dead T-shirt over her head, looks at Jake and says:

TEENAGE GIRL  
Who the fuck is this?

Not pausing to speak, Jake pushes Mast against the sofa. Reaching down, he pulls the detective up by the collar.

JAKE  
What are you doing? You son-of-a-bitch! I've been paying you every week for three months and you've been out here...

TEENAGE GIRL  
I'm splitting.

Jake turns as the girl vanishes.

MAST  
I ain't cheated you, Pilgrim. This is research, damn it! That girl could have told us something.

JAKE  
Research, my ass. I suppose these are the 'extra expenses' I've been paying for? And in the middle of the morning, too.

Mast pulls himself away.

MAST  
Oh, fuck off. You should stay where you belong.

JAKE  
Get out. Get out of here, Goddammit.

Mast picks up his shoes and says half-apologetically:

MAST

I'm only human, you know.

JAKE

Get out.

MAST

But this is my apartment.

JAKE

Get out!

Mast shrugs. There's no reasoning with Van Dorn. He pauses at the door and looks back.

MAST

You prick. You ass-hole prick. You can find your own Goddamn daughter now.

(stops; looks at door)

I'm not even smart enough to lock my own fucking door.

Mast closes the door behind him. Van Dorn looks around the apartment. It's calm now.

On the desk are Mast's briefcase and papers.

Looking through Mast's files, Jake finds pages and pages of notes and information about his daughter's disappearance. Names, places, dates. Lists of massage parlors, sex shops, porn bookshops. The names of owners, managers, filmmakers, interviews with street girls, cops, landlords.

Plus snapshots of Kristen as she once was and 8x10 frame enlargements from "Slave of Love," her hardcore film.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLIDAY INN ROOM - DAY

Jake has spread Mast's papers and photographs across the floor of his Holiday Inn motel room.

His collar open, his tie loosened, Van Dorn squats over the notes and interviews. He studies his find. It includes:

– sex ads from various local papers. Some are crossed out, others circled, others checked.

– a list of massage parlors and sex shops under the heading "possible K was here."

– An L.A. Times newspaper clipping about "Bill Ramada, L.A. Porn Movie Mogul." It features a photo of Ramada on his way out of court.

– a sleazy porn mag article about "Parlor Girls: Hustling and Loving."

CUT TO:

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Van Dorn drives through the crowded streets of Los Angeles' tenderloin. He cruises down Santa Monica, up Western, along Hollywood and back down to Santa Monica.

He passes row upon row of garish adult bookstores, massage parlors and porn theatres. He passes model shops, topless bars, "erotic motels," and peep shows.

Teenage girls stand in the red neon shadows, calling out to passing strangers. Drag queens and leather boys cruise the sidewalks. Jet black pimps, sporting high heels and make coats, stroll from one massage parlor to another. The sound of Latin jazz comes from one doorway; soul disco from another. L.A.P.D. black and whites patrol the streets. Occasionally, a uniformed officer leans out to hassle a passing pimp or hooker.

He drives on. The sex shops have names like "The Sexual Catharthis Center," "Pandora's Box," "The Institute of Oral Love," "69 Club," "The Church of Spiritual Sexuality," "The Participating Center of Sexual Experience," "Mother's Fun Palace," "The Hot Box."

A zoo of lusts.

Jake looks at the seat beside him, checking Mast's list of massage parlors and sex stores with the notation, "possible K was here."

CUT TO:

EXT. ADONIS BOOKSHOP - NIGHT

Van Dorn pulls to the curb and parks his car. Ahead is the plexiglass lettered sign of the Adonis bookstore.

Jake locks his car, buttons his suit coat and walks toward the bookstore. He hesitates a moment, then enters.

CUT TO:

INT. ADONIS BOOKSHOP - NIGHT

Jake steps into the bookstore and looks cautiously from side to side.

His expression is stern, withdrawn, as if suppressing some physical pain. He finds nothing titillating about this world; for him it is simply evil. Neither is he shocked. Has he not been taught: "For every imagination of man's heart is only evil continually"?

An improbable assortment of men peruse the long racks of pornographic books and magazines. A young MALE TELLER sits next to a cash register atop a high counter. Below him, a display case features sexual paraphernalia and films. A small radio softly plays Muzak.

TELLER

Fifty cents admission.

JAKE

What?

TELLER

It's fifty cents admission. It's applicable to a purchase.

Jake fishes in his pocket, comes up with a couple quarters and places them on the counter. The Teller gives him a token

in return.

Van Dorn walks down one row and up another. The explicit titles and magazine covers leap out at him: "Cropped Crotches," "Teenage Obedience Lesson," "Mouthful of Cock," "Hogtie." Many of the magazine covers feature obviously underage girls. He eases his way past a butch young man looking at magazines in the gay section.

Screwing up his courage, Jake steps back to the counter.

He tries but cannot avert his eyes from the grotesque sexual novelties in the case. Dildos, some small, some huge and gross, looking more like instruments of torture than pleasure. Stimulators, vibrators, spiked ticklers. Penis enlargers. Leather paddles, whips, masks, rubber vaginas, fuck faces, masturbators.

JAKE

Do you have a, ah, film called 'Slave of Love?'

TELLER

What we got is just these here.  
(gestures)  
What you see.

JAKE

It's a short film.

TELLER

They're all about the same. You want something?

Jake looks momentarily at the boxes of 16mm film. A couple titles read "Office Party," and "Butt Banger."

JAKE

Well...

Van Dorn pulls a folded 8x10 out of his vest pocket. It's a glossy frame enlargement from "Slave of Love" folded to reveal only Kristen.

JAKE

This is from the movie I was talking about.

TELLER

I don't know what you're talking about.

JAKE

I wondered if you had ever seen this film or this woman...

(points)

...right here.

TELLER

That girl? No, never saw her. I don't know anybody.

JAKE

I'm just trying to find...

(getting testy)

Who owns this store?

TELLER

I don't know. Look, man, if you're looking for somebody maybe you ought to see the cops.

JAKE

But I...

TELLER

I don't know nothing, man.

Jake, realizing he's getting nowhere, pockets his photograph and turns to leave.

TELLER

(continuing)

You don't want anything for your fifty cents?

JAKE

No.

The Teller places two quarters on the counter.

TELLER

Here. Take your fifty cents back.

JAKE

That's all right.

TELLER

No, take it. I don't want your Goddamn fifty cents.

Jake places the token on the counter, takes his quarters and walks back out into the neon night. The Teller turns to no one in particular and says:

TELLER

(continuing)

It's one of those Legion of Decency guys.

CUT TO:

EXT. WILD MARY'S - NIGHT

Van Dorn walks west on Santa Monica Boulevard. The entrance to Wild Mary's is formed by the larger-than-life painted rear view of a bent over woman. Her long legs flank either side of the open passageway.

A young man in a cowboy shirt repeats monotoned litany to passersby:

CALIFORNIA COWBOY

Free information. Free information inside. Come in and get free information. Free information. Free information inside.

Jake pauses in front of the California Cowboy, then enters, passing through Wild Mary's muscled thighs.

CUT TO:

INT. WILD MARY'S - NIGHT

Jake walks into Wild Mary's and is greeted by a young woman in a shift and bikini pants. Her name is BEATRICE.

BEATRICE

Hello. My name is Beatrice. Have you been here before?

JAKE

No.

BEATRICE

What we offer here is nude body to body contact on a bed in a private room. It's twenty dollars a half hour, thirty dollars an hour. Anything else you desire may be discussed in the privacy of your room. Tips are allowed. We accept Bank Americard, Master Charge and American Express.

JAKE

I don't really want... 'body to body contact.'

BEATRICE

That you may discuss with the girl of your choice in the privacy of your room.

A SECOND TEENAGE HOSTESS steps through a beaded curtain and joins Beatrice and Jake.

SECOND HOSTESS

Hi.

JAKE

I'm looking for a girl. Have you ever been in a porno film?

Jake reaches for this folded photo but the Second Hostess takes him by the hand.

SECOND HOSTESS

Come back with me. I'm sure you'll find what you want.

A THIN MAN walks into the room. He looks about 35 and carries a small bag.

THIN MAN

I called on the phone. You have a Domination Room?

BEATRICE

Yeah. Did you bring your own domination equipment?

THIN MAN

Yes, but I've never been here before.

BEATRICE

I'm sure everything will be just the way you want it. Twenty dollars half hour, thirty dollars hour. Tips are allowed.

THIN MAN

Let's start with a half hour.

The Thin Man gives Beatrice a twenty and walks off with her. Jake, curious, follows.

Beatrice and the Thin Man step into the Domination Room: a simulation of a Medieval dungeon. A large wood X-shaped cross is bolted to one wall. There are straps for the client's hands and feet. Instruments of torture hang from another wall. A bare-breasted girl, wearing bikini pants and leather chaps, sits lethargically on a folding chair. A mask of black leather and buckles completely cover her face.

Beatrice notices Jake is following them.

BEATRICE

You want to take a session?

Jake is dazed by what he sees. He wasn't even aware such perversions existed.

JAKE

No. I don't think so.

BEATRICE

You sure? We have regular sessions,  
too. Only twenty dollars?

Jake turns and (like Lot from Sodom) walks away without looking back. As he leaves, he passes the Second Hostess attempting to communicate with two teenage MEXICANS.

TEENAGE MEXICAN

Sexo?

The Second Hostess forms an oval with the index finger and thumb of her left hand and passes the index finger of her other hand through it in an obvious gesture:

SECOND HOSTESS

Si. Sexo. Sexo.

EXT. STAIRWAY TO LOVE - NIGHT

Later that night. Jake locks his car and walks south on Western toward Santa Monica Boulevard. Ahead, a continuous row of massage parlors blend into neon.

Girls call out as he walks: "Come on in and get free information," and "Want to have a good time?" and "Lonely?"

He stops by the Stairway to Love. Three girls stand just inside the door. A sign in the window reads: "Come in – Satisfaction Here." He enters.

CUT TO:

INT. STAIRWAY TO LOVE - NIGHT

The First Hostess, FELICE, greets Jake as he enters:

FELICE

Hi, you been here before?

The two other Hostesses gather round.

JAKE

No.

FELICE

We offer Female Wrestling, that is, nude body to body contact, with a girl of your choice in a private room. Twenty dollars a half hour, thirty dollars hour. Any other arrangements may be discussed in the privacy of your room. Tipping is permitted. We accept Bank Americard, Master Charge and American Express.

JAKE

Yeah.

FELICE

Do you want to take a session?

JAKE

I just want to ask some questions.

FELICE

You may do that in the privacy of your room.

JAKE

Okay. I'll take a half hour.

FELICE

Do you have any particular choice of girl?

JAKE

You'll be fine.

Jake gives Felice a couple tens. She in turn passes them to the MANAGER, a 225 pound, blond-haired Malibu surfer. He puts the money in a cash box and fills out a time sheet.

Jake eyes the Manager uneasily as Felice escorts him up the "Stairway to Love."

CUT TO:

INT. ROOMS - NIGHT

Felice shows Jake into a ten-by-ten cubicle. The walls are barren; a bed-sized slab of foam rubber lies on the floor.

FELICE

Wait a second. I've got to get a sheet.

He looks around the small room. Through the makeshift pasteboard walls he can hear the SOUNDS OF OTHER COUPLES "making love."

Felice quickly returns with a sheet and spreads it across the foam. She slides the door shut behind her.

FELICE

You're still dressed?

JAKE

Well, I want to...

FELICE

(sitting)

Sit down. Make yourself comfortable.  
My name's Felice.

Jake squats down on the foam, crossing his legs under him.

JAKE

There's a girl I want to ask you about.

FELICE

You're not Vice, are you?

(rote)

Do you work for the Los Angeles Police Department, or do you have any other affiliation with any law enforcement agency?

JAKE

No, I don't.

FELICE

I have to ask you that. If you were

Vice you couldn't deny it. You ought to dress less square. You wouldn't get hassled so much. Here, let me help you get that tie off.

Felice reaches over to loosen his tie. Jake, self-conscious, removes his tie.

JAKE

Well, actually I wanted to ask about this girl. I have her picture here.

FELICE

Pull out your cock.

JAKE

What?

FELICE

Cops aren't allowed to do that either. A judge ruled that that was entrapment. Don't ask me why. I guess he figured the sight of a Vice Officer's dong would make a girl unable to stop herself.

She laughs.

JAKE

No, Felice, I'm not a cop. In fact, right now I've got as little respect for the police as you do.

(pulls out folded  
glossy)

I'm looking for a girl. A runaway. I need someone to help me.

FELICE

Are you going to stiff me?

JAKE

What do you mean?

FELICE

Look, that twenty dollars you just

paid, I don't get any of that. That goes to the guys that own this place. I get two bucks an hour, minus ten percent for a bail fund. I make all my money on tips.

JAKE

You want a tip?

FELICE

Sure. What do you want? Tips can be anywhere from thirty dollars to seventy dollars.

JAKE

What do you mean?

FELICE

What do you want to tip me for? Look, you got to spell it out. Whatever you want, just say it.

JAKE

I'll give you a tip. Here's forty dollars.

Jake digs out a couple twenties and gives them to her. Felice tucks the bills into her bikini crotch and pulls off her shirt top. Her breasts seem surprisingly pale and small.

FELICE

Now, what do you want?

JAKE

I said I just wanted to talk to you...

FELICE

That's cool.

JAKE

...about this woman.

(showing glossy)

I'm trying to find her. Do you know her?

FELICE

(uptight)

Look, I don't know anybody. I never seen her before.

Jake, previously upset, is now angered. Nobody tells him anything, he gets nowhere.

JAKE

I'm getting angry.

FELICE

Wait a minute, that's going to cost you more than forty bucks.

JAKE

I'm getting angry. I want some answers.

(stands)

Where's the guy who runs this place?

He slides open the door and walks out. Felice pulls on her shift and follows him.

JAKE

Who is it? That blond guy? Where is he? I'm going to talk to someone.

FELICE

Wait?

JAKE

Where is he? Where's the bastard that runs this shit hole?

The Manager, as if on request, steps to the top of the stairs. His huge frame fills the hallway.

MANAGER

What do you want?

FELICE

He's causing trouble.

JAKE

(contentious)

I got a picture here. I want you to tell me where to find this woman. I been asking everybody. Nobody knows anything.

MANAGER

Calm down, mister. You don't want to get the cops in here do you? You got a family?

JAKE

(shows picture)

I don't suppose you've ever seen this girl before either? Her name's Kristen, but I suppose you've never seen her?

MANAGER

Why don't you just go outdoors, mister? Cool off.

JAKE

Cool off, huh? How's this for cooling off?

He knocks a cheap print of a naked woman off the wall. The frame crashes to the floor.

MANAGER

Hold it, mister.

JAKE

What do you think of that? Or this?

Jake knocks over a small table. The Manager has had enough. He grabs Jake's arm, wrenches it tight behind his back and rams Jake's face into the wall. He forces Jake down the stairway of love.

Jake struggles and kicks, but is no match for the larger man. At the foot of the stairs, the Manager ejects Jake, thrusting him across the sidewalk.

Jake rams face-first into a parked car. He staggers on the

sidewalk. His mouth and nose bloody.

He looks back. A black and white slows down. There's nothing to be done. He moves on.

CUT TO:

INT. HOLIDAY INN ROOM - DAY

Van Dorn, thinking, lies face up on the bed in his motel room. He wears slacks and a white undershirt.

His face is bruised, his lip is swollen. An open First Aid Kit sits on the lamp stand.

LATER. Jake slouches in a chair watching "Day of Discovery," a Sunday evening religious program. The chorus of wholesome young people look like they've come from another planet.

A soothing, innocuous hymn. In the distance church bells RING, as if signalling a call to action.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

The next day. Jake, now wearing a print sport shirt under his navy jacket, strides down Camden. He has a plan.

He checks an office building address and enters.

CUT TO:

INT. OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Jake stands as a SECRETARY says to him:

SECRETARY

Mr. Ramada can see you now.

He thanks her and walks into Ramada's office.

CUT TO:

INT. RAMADA'S OFFICE - DAY

Bill Ramada stands to greet Jake as he enters. His office is expensively decorated in chrome and glass. A framed poster from the New York Film Festival hangs on one wall.

Kurt sits on a plush white sofa.

RAMADA

Hello, Mr. Holcum. You look out of breath. What's the matter? The elevator broke?

(to Kurt)

Is the elevator broke?

Kurt shrugs.

JAKE

No. I walked up. Don't ride elevators.

RAMADA

My secretary said you wanted to discuss a business proposition.

JAKE

Yes.

(as Ramada sits)

I'm interested in financing an adult feature film. I was told you were the man to come to.

RAMADA

Film making can be pretty expensive...

Jake has slipped into his business shoes. He's cool, confident.

JAKE

I've got fifty thousand dollars to invest.

RAMADA

Oh.

(a beat)

Why is it that you want to get into film financing?

JAKE

Well, Bill – mind if I call you Bill?

(as Ramada nods)

Let me be frank. I've made a lot of money. I've got my own business in Detroit. Rivets. I make rivets and sell them to Fisher Body.

(a beat)

Well, rivets, you know, can get pretty boring after a while. When my business manager told me I should shelter some money, I thought I'd try this.

RAMADA

What exactly do you have in mind?

JAKE

I thought I'd invest in a film. I want to sort of become involved in the process of making a film, meet the people who make films, learn how it's done...

RAMADA

In other words, you want to get laid?

JAKE

Not exactly...

RAMADA

It's cool. Why do you think I got in the movies? How much poon do you think you get in the car wash business?

(a beat)

Look, fifty thousand dollars buys a lot of pussy. You can get your joint pulled by beautiful girls every night for the rest of your life for fifty thousand dollars. So why fuck with the movie business?

JAKE

(smiles knowingly)  
It's an investment.

RAMADA

If you want to watch when we shoot a film, for fifty bucks, I let guys stand around and watch. It's a lot cheaper.

JAKE

I thought you were a businessman.

RAMADA

Don't get me wrong. A couple years ago, I woulda jumped at fifty thousand dollars possible financing. But the Lord's been good to me. I can now finance any films I choose. Big ones, small ones. Right now we're setting up a two hundred thousand dollar feature film. Live sound. I like to keep my own money in my films. That way you don't have to share the profits. There's plenty of guys in town that'll take it, though. But if I was you, Mr... what was your name again?

JAKE

Jake.

RAMADA

...I'd just start my own business. That's what I did. Get into kid porn. That's big now. Why don't you come around the set? Meet some people. If you still want to invest, I'll ask around.

JAKE

Sounds all right.

RAMADA

Okay. Keep in touch with my secretary.

Jake nods and turns to exit.

RAMADA  
So long, Mr. Jake.

CUT TO:

INT. L.A. FREE PRESS

The next day, Van Dorn waits in line to place a "Personals" ad in the Los Angeles Free Press.

He wears an open sport shirt, slacks and loafers. Bit by bit he's been going native. He realizes he isn't going to infiltrate the pornography underworld looking like a furniture dealer from Grand Rapids.

Even so, Jake's conventional dress sets him apart from his fellow advertisers. The long line winds back and forth and represents just about every possible deviation from the American heterosexual norm: studs, butches, hookers, freaks, cultists: misfits all.

The CAMERA studies the line: an attractive boy wears a studded collar, a low-rider sports his colors, a diminutive girl waits silently in her hari-krishna robe.

The line inches forward. Behind Jake, one woman tells another about this great swinging party. Van Dorn takes some comfort in the fact that the MAN in front of him, dressed in a seersucker suit, looks pretty straight.

The GIRL AT THE WINDOW takes his ad:

MAN IN SEERSUCKER SUIT  
(reading ad)  
'W/M, 35, 140 fastest tongue in west, will demonstrate proficiency in all dialects to females under 50. Looks not imp.' That's all in caps, 'LOOKS NOT IMP.' 'George Harper. P.O. Box 102, Alhambra, Ca., 91801.'

GIRL AT THE WINDOW  
That's 'dial-a' what?

MAN IN SEERSUCKER SUIT  
Di-a-lects. D-I-A-L-E-C-T-S. Like  
talking.

The Man in the Seersucker Suit pays his fee and Jake steps  
up to the window.

JAKE  
I'd like to place a 'Personals' ad  
in the Free Press.

GIRL AT THE WINDOW  
How many weeks?

JAKE  
Just one.

GIRL AT THE WINDOW  
The rate is a dollar per line, a  
dollar and a half bold face.

Jake takes out a slip of paper and hands it to the Girl.

JAKE  
I have it here. Can you take this  
down?

The Girl takes the slip of paper and reads it back to him as  
she fills in the advertising form:

GIRL AT THE WINDOW  
'Film Producer' – that should be in  
caps, bold face.

JAKE  
Okay.

GIRL AT THE WINDOW  
'Film Producer seeks young men, 18  
to 25, for hardcore film. Prior film  
experience a must. Call Jake at  
Players Motel. 777 Vine. 463-5671.

Jake nods.

CUT TO:

EXT. DARK ROAD - NIGHT

A small film crew sets up a shot. Ramada, Kurt, Van Dorn and others, standing by a trailer, watch from the b.g. Jake's floral rayon shirt is open to the third button.

The script evidently calls for "Dark Road – Night" because that's where the gaffer is arranging lights around a parked red Mustang. A YOUNG ACTOR in a soldier's uniform waits in the car. Niki and another actress, dressed as a stewardess, stand on their marks near the front of the car.

Ramada and Kurt walk over to talk to the YOUNG DIRECTOR. Niki, finished for the moment, walks back toward the trailer.

Niki picks a heavy coat out of the trailer, and wrapping it around her, stands next to Jake. They watch as Ramada gives the Director some last minute advice.

JAKE

Are you the star of this picture?

NIKI

You kidding? Three days work. I finish tonight.

JAKE

The other girl is the star?

NIKI

She thinks so.

(a beat)

What do you do?

JAKE

I work with Ramada. We're doing some pictures together.

NIKI

Well, next time you talk to him, tell him to pay his actresses more.

DIRECTOR  
(calling)  
All right, girls, Niki! To your  
places.

NIKI  
(to Jake)  
Nice meeting you.

Niki throws off her coat and runs to the set. The Actor backs the Mustang out of CAMERA range.

There is a pause, the Director calls: "ACTION!" and the Mustang drives to where the two stewardesses, stranded, are waving for help. The cameraman pans with the Mustang. The Soldier opens his door, looks at the girls' car and offers to help.

Kurt steps over to Jake.

The Soldier, looking at the stranded stewardesses, rubs his inner thigh.

KURT  
(to Jake)  
We'll come in for a closeup here.

Niki unfastens the Soldier's belt and pulls down his zipper. The Soldier leans against the car as Niki sinks to her knees and opens his trousers.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYERS MOTEL - NIGHT

The Players Motel is a "specialty motel." It offers "X-rated movies, Closed Circuit Color TV, Water Beds." Rates are \$10 a night, or \$8 for two hours.

Most clients prefer the two hour rate.

Van Dorn pulls his rented Pontiac into the lot and parks in the first available space.

Weary, he gets out of the car and heads for his room. He

passes a colored whore with a towering synthetic wig.

Further down the line of rooms, Wes De Jong sits slouched in the front seat of his rental car, watching, waiting.

A prostitute wearing jeans and a shoulder bag, enters a lighted room with her trick, a construction worker. He unbuttons his shirt as she closes the curtains.

Wes sits up when he sees his brother-in-law shuffle past the rooms, take out his key and open a door.

CUT TO:

INT. PLAYERS MOTEL - NIGHT

Jake, not bothering to fully shut the door, steps into the room, throws his key on the bed and plops down beside it. He's emotionally and physically exhausted.

The decor is Vegas sleaze: tinted mirrors, red shag carpets, felt wallpaper, pseudo-Louis Seize chairs and a plexiglass chandelier. The large room has, at one end, a sitting area with a sofa and chairs, and at the other, a water bed covered with a black satin sheet. A large ceiling mirror is bolted above the bed.

Jake, hearing a NOISE, looks up.

Wes, wearing a suit and tie, steps tentatively in. He surveys the tawdry room. Jake just looks away.

WES

What's going on, Jake?

Jake says nothing for the moment.

WES

(continuing)

Jake?

JAKE

How did you find me?

WES

I called every L.A. hotel. The Holiday Inn gave this as a referral number. Your office said you had no business in New York, so I figured you had come out here.

(looks around)

What's happening, Jake? What are you doing? Nobody's heard from you. Anne's worried sick. We didn't know if you were dead or alive.

Jake stands and steps over to Wes:

JAKE

Wes, do me a favor.

WES

What?

JAKE

Leave me alone. Go home. Go away.

Wes starts to protest.

JAKE

(continuing)

Just do what I say. Don't ask.

WES

(insistent)

What is going on?

JAKE

I think I've found a way to find Kristen. I have a plan. But I have to be alone.

WES

What plan?

JAKE

You don't want to know.

(a beat; softer)

Now, Wes, leave, please. For me.

WES

What will I tell the others? They care about you.

JAKE

Tell them anything you want. Tell them I'm on a vacation, a business trip. Tell them I needed a rest. Tell them anything, just don't tell them...

Jake looks about the whorey room. His voice cracks a little.

JAKE

(continuing)

..just don't tell them about this.

(A beat)

Now go.

Jake escorts his brother-in-law to the door. Wes turns and embraces him. Jake breaks the embrace and firmly pushes Wes out of the room.

Jake closes and chains the door.

CUT TO:

INT. PLAYERS MOTEL - DAY

The next morning. Jake has rearranged the furniture so that the sofa directly faces the door. Van Dorn, wearing a blue tie-dyed shirt with a sunburst on the front, sits in the middle of the sofa. On either side of the sofa tall thin lamps stand on end tables. A telephone, legal pad and travel clock have been placed on the coffee table. Beside Jake rests Mast's sheaf of notes and pictures. Behind him hangs an iridescent poster featuring the sex signs of the zodiac.

He waits. There is a knock at the door.

JAKE

Come in.

A handsome STUD, about 22, wearing tight jeans, steps cautiously into the room.

STUD #1  
Jake? Mr. Holcum?

Jake checks the appointment schedule on his legal pad:

JAKE  
Pete? Come in.

STUD #1  
(enters)  
Yeah. Peter Long. That's the name I  
use.

JAKE  
We're casting male roles in an  
explicit sex action feature. The pay  
is \$100 a day. There'll be up to two  
weeks work. You say you've had  
experience?

STUD #1  
I was in the Mitchell Brothers' film,  
'Sodom and Gomorrah.' I don't know  
if you saw that. I played Damon, the  
slave of the Queen of Gomorrah.

Van Dorn's pretty good at this. He's given many job interviews  
before. The phone rings and he answers.

JAKE  
Yes, this is Jake.  
(a beat)  
We're casting right now. Have you  
had experience in hardcore films?  
(a beat)  
I can fit you in from 4:00 - 4:15  
today.  
(a beat)  
At the Players Motel, 777 Vine, Room  
106.  
(a beat)  
We'll see you then.

Van Dorn hangs up and looks through his sheaf of papers.

Pulling back a page of notes, he reveals the unfolded 8x10 glossy from "Slave of Love." He looks at the two young men violating his daughter, then back up at Peter Long. Long is neither of the men.

JAKE

(continuing)

All right, Pete. I have your exchange here. If we decide to use you, we'll give you a call.

Long turns and exits. Jake checks his appointment schedule then puts his hand to his temples. He has become the thing he hates most: the procurer. Self-contempt fills his face.

TIMECUT: The next interviewee stands in front of Van Dorn. He's a tall black man about 25. An ex-athlete.

JAKE

You're not exactly the type we're looking for.

BLACK STUD

(hostile)

You mean I'm black?

JAKE

No, just not the type.

BLACK STUD

What do you mean, not the type? Don't you know who I am? I'm Big Dick Brown! I've been in more porno movies than you ever saw. I've worked with Harry Reems. I've worked with Johnny Wad. Not the type! I can come ten times a day. I can keep it hard two hours at a time. My cock is nine inches long.

JAKE

I'm sorry, Mr. Brown. I'm sure you're very good, but at the moment, I've got nothing for you. If something comes up, we'll give you a call.

BLACK STUD

Shit! You just don't want to hire a nigger, that's all. I knew this was a scam. I shouldn'ta come.

The Black Stud turns and storms out.

TIMECUT: An angelic, muscular boy about 19 stands in front of Van Dorn. Jake looks weary.

JAKE

(tired)

I'm sorry, but you're just not the type we are looking for. We had something else in mind.

STUD #2

Don't you want to see my stuff, man?

JAKE

What stuff?

STUD #2

(pointing to crotch)

You know, my stuff!

Jake nods with resignation.

The boy drops his jeans. Framed by firm, smooth, naked thighs, Van Dorn looks at the angelic boy's "stuff." He nods.

TIMECUT: It's the end of the day. The last orange rays of sun come through the window.

Jake, weary, looks up. A young man steps in from the fading sunlight.

The young man looks about 21. His sun-bleached hair falls just to his shoulders. A hippie who's hit the streets.

Jake looks at his 8x10 glossy, then back at the young man. This is him. This is the young man in the pink bikini shorts.

This is the YOUTH from Kristen's hardcore movie, the one who slapped her, the one who forced her face into his crotch.

JISM JIM

Hey man.

JAKE

We're casting for an explicit sex action feature...

JISM JIM

(initially hostile)

I know. Word's out on the street – word's also out you ain't really hiring anyone.

JAKE

That's not true, Mr...?

JISM JIM

Jim Sullivan. Sometimes they call me Jism Jim.

JAKE

That's not true, Jim. In fact, I think you're very close to the type we're looking for.

Jim immediately becomes more compliant.

JISM JIM

Oh yeah? I've done a lot of good stuff. Shorts, features. No major roles it's true. But good stuff.

JAKE

That's what I wanted to talk to you about.

Jake reaches over and picks up the glossy.

JAKE

I've seen you in some stuff. I like your looks. I particularly liked you in this film.

Jake shows him the glossy.

JISM JIM

Oh yeah? I remember that. It was made by some college kids.

JAKE

It was called 'Slave of Love.'

JISM JIM

God, I don't know what it was called. I never saw it. I only got twenty-five bucks for the whole Goddamned thing.

JAKE

I thought you were quite good in it. I also like the girl in it. Really thought she was good.

(points out Kristen)

I wondered if she was still around. If she was still working.

Jim examines Kristen's picture. His expression sours.

JISM JIM

Wait.

(a beat)

Wait a minute. Look, I need the work and I want to be in your picture, but that is one bitch I will never work with again.

Jim, nervous, paces around. He tries to explain.

JISM JIM

(continuing)

Look, that was one freaky bitch, one very, very freaky bitch. I don't know what she was into, I don't know what she was on, but I don't want to have anything to do with her again.

Jake's face grows cold and mean as he listens to Jim's description of his daughter's defilement.

JISM JIM

(cups genitals with  
right hand)

Do you know what she did to me? Do  
you know what she did to me, man?  
That fucking cunt! I couldn't walk  
for a week. My prick was sore and  
red and chewed out. She was cra-zy.  
I don't want to work with her again.

All the while Jim speaks, Van Dorn's long arm reaches slowly  
for the lamp on his right.

His right hand locks around the base of the lamp. Still  
listening, watching Jim intensely, Jake grips the balls of  
his feet into the carpet.

Jake is beyond logic, beyond restraint.

He rises, lamp in hand. The cord pops out of the wall; the  
bulb flashes out.

Reaching across the table, Van Dorn smashes the youth across  
the face. The plaster lamp shatters; the shade flies off.  
Jim reels backward.

Knocking over the coffee table, Van Dorn advances on the  
dazed, bleeding youth.

Van Dorn pounds him again with the plaster stump of the lamp.

Van Dorn stops. He looks down at Jism Jim. The youth is barely  
conscious.

Realizing what he's done, Jake pulls Jim up by his collar  
and drags him into the bathroom.

He hauls the youth into the large "erotic" shower. He pulls  
the shower douche off the wall, and sprays Jim's face.

The battered youth opens his eyes. He's terrified. He's been  
in kinky scenes before. He pleads:

JISM JIM

Hey, stop, stop. I'll do anything

you want. It's okay. I can dig it.  
You can do anything you want to me.

JAKE  
(full of rage)  
Where is she? Where is the girl?

JISM JIM  
She's got a man. A white guy. Tod  
something or other.

JAKE  
Where does he hang out?

JISM JIM  
I don't know.

JAKE  
Where!

JISM JIM  
Look, I know this chick Niki. She  
works at Les Girls. She would know.  
Honest.

Van Dorn lets him go and starts to walk away. Looking back, he sees Jism Jim struggling to his feet. Jake spins around and punches him once more. Jism Jim tumbles back into his shower. Jake walks off rubbing his red knuckles.

CUT TO:

EXT. PLAYERS MOTEL - NIGHT

Jake throws his luggage into the trunk of his car and drives off.

CUT TO:

EXT. LES GIRLS - NIGHT

Les Girls, a garish sexual supermarket, covers several storefronts. Its fluorescent exterior stands open to drifters and browsers alike.

Jake straightens his tie-dye shirt, and enters.

CUT TO:

INT. LES GIRLS - NIGHT

Inside Les Girls is a glow of yellow and orange plexiglass. The bright fluorescents bounce off the white linoleum.

Jake passes an arcade of peep shows and turns the corner.

On one side is a rotunda around which men stand in pay stalls watching a pair of naked female dancers.

On the other side is a row of curtained "phone booths."

Jake walks up to a WOMAN with a coin changer around her waist. A lifer.

JAKE

I was told to meet a girl named Niki here.

LES GIRLS WOMAN

In one of the booths. Any of the first three.

Jake starts over.

LES GIRLS WOMAN

(continuing)

It's five dollars for two minutes.

JAKE

Huh?

LES GIRLS WOMAN

Five dollars a token.

Jake fishes in his pocket and pulls out a ten-dollar bill. He hands it to the woman.

JAKE

Here. I'll take two.

The Les Girls Woman punches out two tokens.

Jake cautiously pulls the curtain aside and steps into the first booth.

The booth is divided by a floor-to-top glass partition. On Jake's side of the partition is a pay wall phone. On the other is an orange folding chair.

The sign on the phone reads "One token – two minutes." Jake puts a token in the phone.

Niki, the girl from Ramada's set, naked, steps into the other half of the booth and plops down on the chair.

NIKI

Hello.

Jake picks up the receiver in his half.

JAKE

Are you Niki?

NIKI

Sure. Like in Mikey and Niki. Did you see that picture?

JAKE

No.

NIKI

Too bad. I wasn't in it.

Jake's eyes flash downward for a moment. No longer shocked, he is saddened by the demeaning vulgarity of it all.

NIKI

(continuing)

It's your money. You talk.

JAKE

I'm making a film. Jim Sullivan's going to be in it. He said you might know where Tod is.

NIKI

Do I know you? Weren't you on the set the other night? With Ramada.

JAKE

Yeah.

NIKI

You making a feature?

JAKE

Um-hm. Live sound.

NIKI

Got any parts? I'm free. Not free-free, but, you know, free. I don't really do this.

Gestures vaguely.

JAKE

Jim and I have been trying to run down a girl.

(takes out glossy)

Do you know her?

He presses the picture against the stained glass partition.

NIKI

Joanne?

JAKE

You know her?

NIKI

No. I saw her with Tod.

JAKE

Do you know where she lives?

NIKI

Nah.

JAKE

Do you know where she would be?

There is a CLICK and the phone goes dead. Niki says something but Jake cannot hear her. She motions to the phone as she gets up to leave.

Jake puts his second token in the phone and Niki sits back down.

JAKE  
(continuing)  
Where is she?

NIKI  
Tod might know.

JAKE  
Where's he?

NIKI  
Last I heard he went to San Diego.

JAKE  
If we went there, would you be able to find him?

NIKI  
(eyeing him)  
You're not a film producer, are you?

JAKE  
How much do you make a week, Niki?

Jake uses his manipulative voice, the one he might use when discussing a shade of blue in a convention display.

NIKI  
(catching on)  
Are you a private detective?

JAKE  
Something like that. How much do you make?

NIKI  
Here? What a joke. There was some

detective asking about that girl.

JAKE

Three hundred?

NIKI

This is just temporary. I once made nine hundred in outcall.

JAKE

I'll give you \$700 a week, cash, if you help me find this girl.

NIKI

Up front?

JAKE

Half now, half later.

NIKI

Make it nine hundred. That was my best week.

JAKE

Okay. My client pays for it anyway.

NIKI

When do we start?

JAKE

Tonight. When you get out, we'll go.

(a beat)

Why didn't you tell the other detective?

NIKI

(shrugs)

This is different. This is nine hundred dollars.

CUT TO:

EXT. VAN NUYS DELL - NIGHT

Wes parks in front of a Van Nuys delicatessen and walks in.

CUT TO:

INT. VAN NUYS DELI - NIGHT

Wes walks into the well-hit deli and spots Andy Mast sitting alone with a glass and a bottle of beer.

A cross section of California types are scattered around the room. A JUKEBOX plays country and western.

WES

Mr. Mast? My name's Wes DeJong. I'm Jake Van Dorn's brother-in-law. We met out here a couple months ago when he hired you. Your agency said you might be here.

Mast motions for him to sit.

MAST

Ssh. I'm on a stakeout.

WES

(looks around)

Oh.

Mast looks down at the beer bottle.

MAST

I'm staking out this beer bottle. Trying to find out if I'll finish it or it'll finish me.

WES

I'm worried about Jake.

MAST

I'm off that case. He fired me.

WES

He didn't look good at all. Something strange is going on. He's got himself into some trouble. He wouldn't say what.

MAST

(lights cigarette)

I'll tell you, that was an interesting case. The Van Dorn girl. I've handled runaway cases like it before. Usually when you put the pressure on the porn underworld for an underage kid, she pops up in about a week. Everybody denies ever seeing her, but there she is at the airport with a prepaid ticket home. Well, I put pressure on all over town for this girl and it stayed cold as ice. In fact, certain people for this girl and – nothing.

(thinks)

I guess I gave your brother-in-law sort of a raw deal.

Mast spots a long-haired youth walking toward the juke box and calls to him:

MAST

(continuing)

Hey, buddy, E-fifteen.

The kid ignores him and makes his selection: a rock song.

WES

I want to rehire you. To find out what's happening to my brother-in-law.

MAST

I've been on another case. All day.

(a beat)

I suppose I can move it over. Seven fifty a week, plus travel expenses.

WES

Do you really think Kristen is just a runaway?

Mast thinks. A shadow crosses his face.

MAST

Maybe. Maybe not.

WES

I also want you to protect my brother-in-law.

MAST

Huh?

WES

You have to understand. He can be mean, self-righteous. He had a Vishund once. Loved that dog. He came home one day and the dog bit him. He took that dog and staked him out in the back yard. It was winter. Every day he came home and watched that dog until he froze. He's capable of doing anything.

MAST

To his own daughter?

WES

To anybody.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY - NIGHT

Van Dorn's car speeds through the California night. The Pacific, moon-lit, stretches like a sinister plain.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN DIEGO MOTEL - NIGHT

Jake pulls into a freeway exit motel and parks at the office.

CUT TO:

INT. JAKE'S MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Jake's suitcase lies open on the luggage rack. He pulls off

his tie-dyed shirt, folds it up neatly, and places it in the suitcase.

He sits on the edge of the bed and undoes his shoestrings. He removes each shoe as if it were an individual effort.

There's a KNOCK.

Jake looks through the blinds, unhooks the chain and opens the door.

Niki, tugging up her jeans, scuffles in.

NIKI

You actually paid for both these rooms? I thought you were just going to get a receipt for two, and kickback the desk man.

Jake, awkward, puts a shirt on.

NIKI

(continuing)

I thought you were going to bed?

JAKE

I am.

Niki is street-wise. She can instantly interpret situations which would stymie the average person; but, as if to balance this perceptivity, she is often stymied by the ordinary.

In brief: she assumes Jake is paying her \$900 a week not only to help him but also to be his personal playmate.

NIKI

Do you have any pills? Any Valium, Librium? You know, pimps will sell Valium at fifty cents a piece. Can you believe that?

Niki sits on his bed, her legs folded under her.

NIKI

(continuing)

You know Valiums pick me right up?  
Take four or five and I'm wide awake.  
Isn't that strange? Know what puts  
me to sleep? Coke. I think I'm really  
fucked up.

Niki removes her sweater and starts to pull off her Rorer T-shirt. Jake motions for her to stop.

JAKE

No.

NIKI

Huh?

JAKE

Niki. Calm down. Relax. Let's just  
talk for a while. Then, later, you'll  
go back to your room and we'll get  
some sleep.

He sits on the bed beside her.

NIKI

You have anything to drink? You want  
to go out and get something?

JAKE

I don't drink, but you can go out.

NIKI

You don't drink?

JAKE

(points to stomach)

Ulcers.

Niki studies him for a moment, then says:

NIKI

You're not a private detective either,  
are you?

JAKE

No.

NIKI

I didn't think so. I've fucked  
detectives. Who are you?

JAKE

A friend.

NIKI

Of Joanne's?

JAKE

Yeah.

(looks away)

I'm her father.

NIKI

(more disappointment  
than shock)

Jesus.

JAKE

Her name is Kristen. She disappeared  
a couple of months ago.

NIKI

And your wife? Where's she?

JAKE

She's dead.

NIKI

Hey, don't worry about it. Your  
daughter's around. We'll find her in  
a couple days.

CUT TO:

EXT. SAN DIEGO - DOWNTOWN - DAY

Jake's car drives through San Diego's "downtown," four square blocks of adult bookstores, peep show and flop houses south of San Diego's center. Uniformed soldiers from Camp Pendleton and the Miramar Naval Station occasionally cross the wide streets.

The Singapore Club, Lux Adult Movies, the Princess Rap Parlor,  
Curious Books Shop, Sexciting Movies...

CUT TO:

EXT. THE OKINAWA BAR - DAY

Jake and Niki walk toward the Okinawa, a hangout for working girls, players and street people.

Niki, tugging up her jeans, walks next to Jake. She wears her Rorer T-shirt; Jake a blue dress shirt.

NIKI

(putting her arm on  
Jake)

Jim Rucker runs this place. He knows  
where everybody is. It's a nice place.  
Hires a lot of girls, but they don't  
pay shit.

CUT TO:

INT. OKINAWA BAR - DAY

Jake holds the door open for Niki as they enter.

The Okinawa is a credit to its namesake. A BLACK PLAYER,  
sitting at the bar, stares absently at two girls playing  
pool.

Niki, in her element, steps up to the bar.

NIKI

(to Counter Girl)  
Is Rucker here?

BAR MAID

He'll be back in a couple hours.

NIKI

Tell him Louise was here. I'll come  
back later.

They turn to exit.

EXT. SAN DIEGO BEACH - DAY

Jake and Niki sit at a ramshackle picnic table at a park overlooking the ocean. Several children play in the distance.

Niki finishes her Big Mac, crumbles the bag and throws it away. She unwraps a Milky Way and she finishes her fries.

Jake watches with astonishment as she chomps her way through a second candy bar.

JAKE

You really shouldn't eat like that.  
All that sugar. It's not good for  
you.

NIKI

At least I'm a growing person.

JAKE

You won't keep growing at this rate.

NIKI

What rate?

JAKE

You know what I'm talking about.

NIKI

(snotty)

You never met a working girl before,  
have you? You think I like sucking  
off guys all night? Maybe I do. So  
what?

(a beat)

You can't even say it, can you?

JAKE

Say what?

NIKI

'Sucking off.'

JAKE

Okay. Sucking off. Now does that make me as good as you?

NIKI

You don't understand shit.

JAKE

Okay, tell me. Why do you live like you do?

NIKI

Did you ever live in a room with six people and you didn't have any money, any food, any furniture? Have your brother come out, his car break down, he can't get a job? Your friends stealing food, going through trash behind a supermarket?

JAKE

(sympathetic)

Is that the way it was with you?

NIKI

No. But does it make any difference?

(a beat)

How did you get to be the way you are?

Jake doesn't answer.

NIKI

(continuing)

Don't knock it. A girl can save up a lot money doing this – big money. Then you're free. You can go off to Europe, meet somebody, get married. My girlfriend's going to buy her own beauty parlor. Not me. I'm gonna travel. 'Keep movin' that's my motto.

(a beat)

Would you rather work at Copper Penny at a dollar-eighty an hour, having every two-bit cocksucker able to

yell at you? I can make more money  
suc... doing what I do for five  
minutes than I can all week at another  
job.

JAKE

You used to work at Copper Penny?

NIKI

No.

JAKE

(pause)

You and I, Niki, have very different  
ideas about sex.

NIKI

Why? Are you a sex fiend?

JAKE

(smiles)

No.

NIKI

Neither am I.

JAKE

But it's all you do.

NIKI

How important do you think sex is?

JAKE

Not very.

NIKI

We're just alike. You think sex is  
so unimportant you don't do it. I  
think sex is so unimportant I don't  
care who I do it with.

Jake thinks. That sounds right. But it can't be right. He  
looks away, then back at her.

JAKE

You can never understand a person like me. I am a mystery to you. A middle class person, a Mid-westerner. A man who doesn't pursue women. A man who believes in social order. A man who goes to church, believes in God, and a man who, at the end of his life, believes he will be redeemed.

(a beat)

This is all unfathomable to you.

Fifty years ago, in art, the prostitute sought to justify her life to the bourgeoisie. Now it is the bourgeoisie who must justify himself to the whore.

JAKE

(continuing)

I don't see why I must justify myself to you. I don't care about the things you do. I don't care what's happening in New York or Los Angeles. I don't care about movies or TV. I don't care who's on Johnny Carson.

NIKI

(incredulous)

What do you care about?

JAKE

(cold)

I care about my daughter.

INT. OKINAWA BAR - DAY

Niki and Jake stand at the counter talking with JIM RUCKER, an entrepreneurial type about 40.

NIKI

You remember me. Louise? Rhymes with squeeze.

RUCKER

(looks, then nods)

You working in San Diego now?

NIKI

I'm still in L.A., but I'm looking for Tod. I heard he was around.

RUCKER

'Was.' He and that shitheel Ratan went down to T-J. Maybe I shouldn't say that. Anyway, I hear he's back in Frisco now.

NIKI

Was he with a girl?

RUCKER

No.

NIKI

Thanks.

Niki starts to leave.

RUCKER

Keep in touch, baby. Got some good stuff comin' up. Need you back, baby.

(as they exit)

And take good care of your friend for me.

Jake turns back as Niki gives him a tug.

CUT TO:

EXT. OKINAWA BAR - DAY

They walk toward the car.

JAKE

What's T-J?

NIKI

Tijuana.

JAKE

They were here?

NIKI

Tod was.

(her voice chills)

He was with Ratan.

JAKE

What does that mean?

(no answer)

What does he do?

NIKI

He deals in pain.

JAKE

Is Kristen safe?

She doesn't answer.

JAKE

(continuing)

Let's get a plane for San Francisco.

CUT TO:

INT. L.A. POLICE MISSING PERSONS - DAY

DETECTIVE BURROWS walks back into his office. Mast, sitting on the edge of the desk, is waiting for him.

BURROWS

Apparently your friend has gone into Mexico. A Border Guard responded to the APB. How does it feel to have the L.A.P.D. doing your work for you?

MAST

You're going to thank me for this. You know what the media's like. They love this kinda shit. If that guy goes off half-cocked and gets himself hurt, you're going to have so much bad publicity, you...

BURROWS

(interrupting)

I heard you the first time. We had nothing to go on with this kid. Just a runaway.

(a beat)

Do you really think he's in danger?

MAST

If he has anything to say about it, yeah. I've been asking a lot of questions and I don't like the answers I'm getting. He's made a lot of people nervous, including some poor faggot who thought he was going to be a movie star.

BURROWS

We aren't gonna arrest him for that...

MAST

(interrupting)

Big threat. TV would ream you.

BURROWS

Keep me informed of what he's up to. You help me, I'll help you.

Mast nods.

BURROWS

(continuing)

Why don't people stay where they belong?

CUT TO:

INT. SAN DIEGO AIRPORT - DAY

Jake and Niki sit in a line of multi-colored plexi-glass chairs in the Western Terminal of the airport. Niki munches a pack of Chuckles while Jake, his elbows on his knees, looks at the floor. Niki prattles on.

NIKI

You know what your problem is? You're a very negative person. You think negatively.

Jake tries to ignore her.

NIKI

(continuing)

You have to believe in something. What do they believe in – the Whatjamacillit church?

JAKE

Christian Reformed. It's a Dutch Calvinist denomination.

NIKI

Do they believe in reincarnation? I believe in reincarnation.

JAKE

They believe in the 'TULIP!'

NIKI

What the crap?

JAKE

(smiles)

It's an anagram. It comes from the Canons of Dort. Every letter stands for a different belief. T-U-L-I-P. Like – are you sure you're interested in this?

NIKI

Yeah, yeah, go on.

JAKE

T stands for Total depravity, that is, all men, through original sin, are totally evil and incapable of good. 'All my works are like filthy rags in the sight of the Lord.'

NIKI

Shit.

Jake is charmed. He's never been called upon to explain his beliefs to someone so totally ignorant of them.

JAKE

Be that as it may. U is for Unconditional Election. God has chosen a certain number of people to be saved, The Elect, and He has chosen them from the beginning of time. L is for Limited Atonement. Only a limited number will be atoned, will go to Heaven.

NIKI

Fuck.

JAKE

I can stop if you want.

NIKI

No, please go on.

The INTERCOM ANNOUNCES a flight: Jake listens for a moment. It's a flight to Mexico City.

JAKE

I is for Irresistible Grace. God's grace cannot be resisted or denied. And P is for the Perseverance of the Saints. Once you are in Grace you cannot fall from the number of the elect. And that's the 'TULIP.'

NIKI

Wait, wait. I'm trying to figure this out. This is like Rona Barrett. Before you become saved, God already knows who you are?

JAKE

He has to. That's Predestination. If God is omniscient, if He knows everything – and He wouldn't be God

if He didn't – then He must have known, even before the creation of the world, the names of those who would be saved.

NIKI

So it's already worked out. The fix is in?

JAKE

More or less.

NIKI

Wow. Then why be good? Either you're saved or you ain't.

JAKE

Out of gratitude for being chosen. That's where Grace comes in. God first chooses you, then allows you, by Grace, to choose Him of your own free will.

NIKI

(amazed)

You really believe all that?

JAKE

Yeah.

(shrugs)

Well, mostly.

NIKI

I thought I was fucked up.

JAKE

I'll admit it's confusing from the outside. You've got to see it from the inside.

NIKI

If you see anything from the inside it makes sense. You ought to hear perverts talk. A guy once almost had me convinced to let his dachshund

fuck me.

JAKE

It's not quite the same thing.

NIKI

It doesn't make any sense to me.

The INTERCOM ANNOUNCES Western Flight #601 to San Francisco.  
They rise.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAVEL LODGE - DAY

Jake's rental car pulls into a San Francisco Travel Lodge.

CUT TO:

EXT. NORTH BEACH - AFTERNOON

Niki places a call from a phone booth. Jake watches the passing denizens of North Beach.

The familiar sordid tableau is played out before his eyes:  
massage parlors, peep shows, strip joints, sex shops.

NIKI

(hangs up phone)

Tod'll meet you at the bookstore at  
Eddy and O'Farrell tomorrow noon. I  
told him you were a 'specialty'  
customer.

JAKE

Why can't I meet him now?

Niki, cocky, walks next to Jake. She is in her element. She  
calls out to a pimp:

NIKI

I hope your prick falls off.

Jake, surprised, turns away from the pimp's cold stare.

JAKE

Why can't I meet him now?

Niki brazenly calls out to a strutting hooker:

NIKI

Rot in hell, honey.

(to Jake)

He's busy now.

JAKE

Where does he live.

NIKI

Just a second. It's my ass I'm

risking. You better do it my way.

These fuckers don't mess around.

Niki walks off. Jake follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAVEL LODGE - DUSK

Jake's rental car is parked outside his motel room.

CUT TO:

INT. JAKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jake sits on the edge of his bed, studying the crease in his trousers.

His shirt is partially open.

Niki, swigging a Coke sits squatted atop the built in desk.

JAKE

I must have been in more motel rooms  
this week than in the rest of my  
life. At least it feels that way.

NIKI

I know what you mean. After a while  
they all look the same.

JAKE

They are the same.

NIKI

Do you live in a house back in  
wherever.

JAKE

Grand Rapids? Of course.

NIKI

On your own land?

Jake nods.

NIKI

(continuing)

Just you and your daughter?

Jake nods.

NIKI

(continuing)

Look, I really don't know your  
daughter but...

JAKE

But what?

NIKI

I wouldn't expect too much. I mean  
about her coming back. Once a girl  
gets into the life.

JAKE

What makes you so sure?

NIKI

(changing the subject)

Your wife isn't dead is she?

Van Dorn surprised, turns around.

JAKE

Why do you say that?

NIKI

Just a guess. She ain't dead though is she?

Jake shakes his head "no."

NIKI

(continuing)

She left you right?

JAKE

Yeah.

(a beat)

She was the one called Joanne. How'd you find that out?

NIKI

Just a guess. Did you have it good with your wife? You know, sex.

Jake resents Niki's forwardness: what business of hers is this?

JAKE

I don't blame you, Niki. Really I don't. It's this culture, where everything's based on sex, sold on sex...

(starts to get angry)

...magazines, music, TV. It's destroying everything. Buy this 'cause of sex, use this 'cause of sex. Kids think it's normal. They think they're supposed to talk dirty, wear scanty clothes...

NIKI

(interrupting)

Don't get upset. I lied too. I don't make no five hundred dollars a week. Everything I make goes to Granville.

JAKE

Granville?

NIKI

My man. 'Pimp.' I split 'cause he don't treat me for shit. Thinks he's so cool 'cause he's black. I once tried to take my clothes but he says, 'You can't take 'em 'cause they're my clothes – I bought 'em.' Yeah, with my fucking money...

Jake doesn't want to get involved with Niki's problems:

JAKE

Look, Niki, this really isn't my business. I don't know anything about...

NIKI

So I guess we're both fucked, huh?  
But at least you get to go to heaven.  
I don't get shit.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Jake, suspicious, walks over to the window and peeks out. Seeing someone he recognizes, he opens the door.

Andy Mast, woebegone and wrinkled as usual, stands at the door.

MAST

(looking at Niki  
knowingly)

This is just how you found me once.

Jake slips outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAVEL LODGE - DUSK

JAKE

What are you doing here?

MAST

I felt like such a shit, pilgrim,  
after what I did to you – not that  
I did anything wrong – that I kept  
investigating, poking around. There's  
some poor s.o.b. in L.A. with his  
face all bent out of shape who you've  
damaged his movie career. Lucky for  
him, people don't look at his face.

JAKE

Do the police want to arrest me?

MAST

Nah. They don't care about some faggot  
hustler. They're more interested in  
your daughter's health – and yours.  
Like I am.

JAKE

(disbelieving)

Yeah, sure.

MAST

Listen, pilgrim, you're way out on a  
limb here. You don't know what you're  
into.

JAKE

You sure as hell haven't been any  
help.

MAST

I'm sorry about that. Have you found  
anything out? You've got to tell me.

JAKE

Why don't you tell me something for  
a change?

MAST

Like what?

JAKE

Who is Ratan?

Mast pales.

MAST

Where'd you hear that name?

JAKE

I just heard. Who is he?

Mast walks toward the swimming pool.

Mast looks at the still, blue surface of the pool. Jake steps beside him. A tourist passes by with his two sons. Mast thinks, then speaks:

MAST

You know, it's possible to buy anything on this earth. You can buy child whores, slaves. You can have people raped, killed...

(a beat)

One of the men who supposedly arranges such things is named Ratan. He usually isn't in this country.

(a beat)

How'd you hear about him?

JAKE

It's just a name.

MAST

Don't do anything more. I'll find out what I can.

JAKE

(nodding toward motel)

Does she know anything about this?

MAST

Who? The whore? No. She's just a victim. A dime a dozen.

CUT TO:

INT. JAKE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Jake sleeps in his Travel Lodge bed.

A jagged shard of blue light plays across his face.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDDY AND O'FARRELL STREETS - DAY

Jake stands at the corner, then turns and enters the porn bookstore.

CUT TO:

INT. PANDORA'S BOOKS - DAY

Jake looks around.

Seeing no one he recognizes, he pays his admission fee walks down a rack, picks up a copy of "Hot Twat," pages through it.

It's been over a week since Jake first stepped into a porno bookstore. The change in his manner is striking. He now seems at ease in the endless night-world of pandering and pornography.

A few moments later, a long-haired man steps up behind him. The young man is wearing red alligator boots and a silver and turquoise belt – like the man in "Slave of Love." Tod scrutinizes Jake a moment before speaking.

TOD  
(under his breath)  
Hey, Jake.

Jake turns. Tod gives him some skin. Tod seems unattractive at first, but the longer one looks at him, the more oddly sensual he appears.

TOD  
(continuing)  
I hear you got money to spend.  
(as Jake nods)  
I hear you're interested in...  
interesting things.

JAKE

Yeah.

TOD

Do you work for the San Francisco Police Department, or do you have any other affiliation with any law enforcement agency?

JAKE

No.

TOD

What you got in mind?

JAKE

I want to meet Ratan.

TOD

(backs off)

What is that? A kind of chair? I never heard of no Ratan.

JAKE

(studying Tod)

I was told that there were certain things that only Ratan could provide.

TOD

You're talking about real excitement?

JAKE

Yeah. I heard you and Ratan just came from Mexico. And that you had a film of a girl being, ah you know...

TOD

Who told you about this?

JAKE

Rucker.

TOD

I don't know no Ratan, but I may be

able to help you out. It's not me,  
of course. Just helping out a friend.  
It'll cost you five hundred bucks  
for a single screening.

JAKE

Is this with a girl named Kristen?

TOD

(nods)

Um-hm. You got the five hundred?

JAKE

Well...

TOD

Take it or leave it.

JAKE

Okay.

TOD

Meet me here today at seven o'clock.  
With the money. Then we'll go see  
the film.

JAKE

Good.

Tod puts his hand on Jake's shoulder and smiles.

TOD

You ain't gonna ever have no thrill  
like this.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAVEL LODGE - DUSK

Niki sits on a bed watching a syndicated sitcom and munching  
a Taco Bell enchilada.

She hears a CAR pull up and a man's FOOTSTEPS walks to the  
door.

She cautiously gets up to see who it is.

EXT. EDDY AND O'FARRELL STREETS - DUSK

Jake walks out of Pandora's Books behind Tod. They turn the corner and walk out of sight.

CUT TO:

EXT. JONES STREET - DUSK

Jake and Tod enter the "Hot Pink" massage parlor. A sign on the front door reads: "Sex/Intercourse/Here."

CUT TO:

INT. HOT PINK - NIGHT

Tod leads Jake past two girls into the back of the parlor. Tod smiles to one of the parlor girls and touches the other.

INT. MASSAGE PARLOR - NIGHT

Tod ushers Jake into a barren "office" in the rear of the parlor.

A sheet has been tacked up at one end of the office. Across the room, the projectionist, a boy about 15, stands next to a battered old 16mm silent projector.

Two other men sit in the darkened room. One looks middle-aged and decadent; the other, about 26, wears jeans, a western shirt, and a beat up flight jacket. He's saved up several years for this.

Jake sits in an empty office chair next to the other men.

Tod nods to the boy and he starts up the projector. A grainy black and white image appears on the screen.

The projectionist punches a cheap cassette player which echoes scratchy Mexican fiesta music through the room.

It's clear why the projectionist has chosen a Latin sound track: the film is set up in a Tijuana flophouse.

On screen, a girl with long blonde hair and Kristen's build sits on the edge of a barren double bed. She wears jeans and a shirt. Her face is covered by a black leather mask. The eye slits are taped shut.

A Cerveza poster of a half-naked Mexican girl hangs on the wall behind her.

A young Mexican, stripped to the waist, walks over to the girl. Taking instructions from someone off camera, he starts to undress her.

The girl, unable to see her seducer, nevertheless submits to his desires.

Jake watches the screen from the shadows. The pale images flicker across a metal filing cabinet behind him. Tod slips out of the room.

On screen, the young Mexican has finished the girl. He turns to the director for further instructions.

A man wearing a white suit walks into the frame. He flashes a stiletto from his sleeve and stabs the young Mexican. The girl, not able to see what is happening, turns her head quizzically.

Jake watches in unbelieving horror. The young man in the flight jacket is calm and dispassionate.

The young Mexican falls to the floor bleeding. The man in the white suit bends down and wipes the stiletto on the Mexican's pant leg.

The man in the white suit steps over to the girl and puts one hand under her mask. He lifts his stiletto again. He rips off the mask from the girl's face; it is not Kristen.

Jake is relieved. The faces of the others are full of anticipation.

Jake's relief turns to horror at what he now sees. Blurred images reflect against the metal cabinet behind him.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAVEL LODGE - NIGHT

Mast, waiting for Jake, talks to Niki. The TV still plays in the background.

MAST

You know Granville's looking for you, Niki?

NIKI

My name ain't Niki. It's Pattica, like in Attica.

MAST

Granville's looking for you anyway.

NIKI

(arrogant)

Who's that?

MAST

The guy who bought you that ring.

NIKI

Well, he can just fuck himself.

She pulls off her ring and starts to hand it to Mast.

MAST

Keep it, honey. You're gonna need it. I know that boy. He can make life real tough for a working girl. He'll string you out again.

Gestures to his veins.

NIKI

You can fuck off, too.

MAST

You're taking a big chance.

NIKI

I ain't ever gonna see him again  
anyway.

MAST

Oh no? What you gonna do? Get a job?

Niki, sullen, looks away. Then, defensive, she says what she's been thinking.

NIKI

Jake'll take care of me.

MAST

Who? Van Dorn? You must be kidding  
yourself, honey. You think once that  
guy finds his daughter he'll care  
about you?

Niki looks away again.

A car pulls in front of the motel room. They both turn toward  
the door.

Jake, weary and angry, walks in out of the night. Ignoring  
Mast, he takes Niki by the arm and leads her out of earshot.

JAKE

Niki...

When Mast moves to overhear them, Jake turns and edges him  
toward the door.

MAST

What happened, pilgrim?

JAKE

(forceful)

Just leave me alone.

MAST

But I'm here to help you...

Jake ushers Mast out the door and chains it. Mast waits  
outside as Jake returns to Niki.

NIKI

Did you find out where she was?

JAKE

Tod gave me the slip. I have to find him again. Where does he live?

NIKI

(sensing something is wrong)

What happened?

JAKE

(cold)

Where is he?

NIKI

I can't tell you that.

Taking Niki gently by the shoulder, Jake sits her on the edge of the bed. He speaks in a calm, forceful, parental tone:

JAKE

Listen, Niki. My daughter's been missing five months. I've gone through a lot to find out what's happened to her. I just saw a girl killed. I will not let Tod slip out of my hands. You have to tell me where he is.

NIKI

But then you'll forget about me.

JAKE

(insistent)

Where is he, Niki?

Jake starts to raise his hand.

NIKI

(relents)

Try a place called the House of Bondage. It's a plain black storefront next to Jane's. There are some

apartments in back.

Jake stands up and, taking Niki's head in his hands, kisses her on the forehead.

JAKE

I won't forget you.

Jake turns and exits.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAVEL LODGE - NIGHT

Jake passes Mast and heads for his car. Mast restrains him.

MAST

What are you doing, pilgrim? Where are you going?

Jake tries to push his way past Mast.

MAST

(continuing)

Let me take care of this. I don't want you to get hurt.

Jake pushes Mast aside. Mast continues to talk as Jake opens his car door and gets in.

MAST

(continuing)

Don't do anything until the police get there. Don't hurt that girl.

Jake turns his car and takes off. Mast hurries back into the motel room.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAVEL LODGE - NIGHT

Mast heads immediately for the phone, talking to Niki as he goes:

MAST  
You've got to tell me where he's  
going.

Mast sits down and dials.

MAST  
(continuing)  
Hello, police? My name's Mast. Get  
me Joe Klein in Vice.

Mast turns to Niki:

MAST  
(continuing; tough)  
You don't know that man. He'll hurt  
his own fucking daughter. I've got  
to stop him.  
(a beat)  
You know about Ratan, don't you?

Niki looks on in fear and confusion.

CUT TO:

EXT. EDDY STREET - NIGHT

Van Dorn walks down the garish neon strip past "Jane's  
Pleasure House" to an unmarked black storefront. The door is  
open.

A light shines on a sign reading: "387 OPEN."

He walks in.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE OF BONDAGE - NIGHT

As Jake steps through the barred black door, he is hit with  
a wave of familiar smells: Human sweat, blood and sexual  
fluids.

The House of Bondage specializes in the three "disciplines:"  
bondage, dominance and humiliation. It has four domination

rooms, each decorated in a different decor – Babylonian, Medieval, Louis Quatorze, prison motifs – to satisfy a variety of tastes.

Two dominants, dressed in black satin pants and shirts, sit on the sofa. HOPE, wearing a black silver-studded collar, walks over to Jake. Her voice is hard:

HOPE  
Hello. You want some information?

JAKE  
Yeah.

HOPE  
We offer...

JAKE  
Yeah, yeah...

HOPE  
...the disciplines: bondage,  
domination and humiliation.

JAKE  
I'm looking for Tod. Is he in?

HOPE  
I don't know no Tod.

JAKE  
What girls you got here?

HOPE  
My name is Hope. This is Faith.  
(gestures to girl on  
sofa)  
Charity's in back.

JAKE  
That's all you got, three girls?

HOPE  
Man, how many girls do you need?

JAKE

I was told there was a real nice girl here named Joanne. Quite young.

HOPE

That's Charity. She's out back. She'll be free in half hour.

Jake pushes her aside.

The girls watch with surprise as Jake marches through the curtain toward the rear of the parlor.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE OF BONDAGE - REAR - NIGHT

Jake steps down the corridor. A customer emerges from a room and passes him.

He slides open one door: the Medieval Dungeon is empty. He continues on.

He passes the Louis Quatorze Room. It, too, is empty.

Hope calls from behind Jake:

HOPE (O.S.)

Tod!

Tod steps into the corridor in front of Jake. Tod squints to recognize the intruder.

TOD

(suspicious)

What do you want?

(scrutinizes him)

Do I know you from somewhere?

JAKE

I want to know where my daughter is. Her name is Kristen, or Joanne. She's with you.

TOD

I don't know what you're talking about.

He starts to leave.

JAKE

The police know about Ratan. They know he's here with you. They know everything.

Tod is taken aback, but tries not to show it.

TOD

Oh, yeah? Goody for them.

Tod starts past Jake, but Jake stretches out his hand.

TOD

(continuing)

Get the fuck out of here.

Tod tries to push past Van Dorn but Jake grabs his arms and tries to twist them. Tod breaks free and Jake smacks him across his forehead with his open hand.

TOD

(continuing)

You wait here. I'll find out where she is.

JAKE

You ain't goin' nowhere alone.

Jake is beyond reasoning. Tod looks around for an alternate route of escape.

Tod ducks into the Prison Room. Jake follows.

Vertical bars cover the grey walls. Handcuffs and chains hang from the bars. In the center of the room, a Harley Davidson "Hog" is incongruously mounted, its front wheel pointed skyward. Leather straps are attached to the handlebars.

Tod skirts the Harley and pushes it toward Jake as he enters.

The huge 1200-pound machine crashes toward Van Dorn.

Jake jumps back as the bike bounces in front of him, then starts for Tod.

Lowering his shoulder, Tod smashes through the thin pasteboard wall. Jake, stepping over the motorcycle, pursues.

In the Louis Quatorze Room, Jake grabs Tod by the shoulders and spins him around. Tod swings as he turns, hitting Jake. Jake grabs Tod's legs as he falls.

They both crash through the next pasteboard wall into the Medieval Dungeon.

Tod breaks free, runs through the dungeon and bursts through the last pasteboard wall. Jake pulls himself to his feet and follows.

JAKE

Where is she?

Hope and Faith, standing against the wall, watch as Tod and Jake burst through the wall and dash out the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. O'FARRELL - NIGHT

Jake chases Tod out of the House of Bondage.

Van Dorn pushes one girl, knocks over another and catches up with Tod at the corner.

He tackles Tod around the waist, rams him into a building and turns him around.

JAKE

Where's Ratan?

TOD

Who?

Jake grabs the young man by his hair and pulls him down the street. Tod yelps.

JAKE  
Ratan!

Passing a parking meter, Jake smashes Tod's head into it.  
Tod's forehead cracks into the glass.

Tod, bleeding, protests:

TOD  
That film was a fake! Everything's  
phony...

JAKE  
Ratan!

When Tod doesn't immediately answer, Jake rams his skull  
into the next parking meter. Tod, bleeding, dazed, struggles  
to stay on his feet. Jake pulls him forward.

JAKE  
(continuing)  
I know he's here!

Gripping his hair more tightly, Van Dorn drags him to the  
next parking meter and smashes his head into it.

JAKE  
(continuing)  
Ratan!

Curious bystanders watch Jake smash the youth's bleeding  
head into the next parking meter.

TOD  
(terrified)  
Who the fuck knows? The Four Aces.  
He goes there.

JAKE  
Let's go.

Van Dorn pulls Tod down the sidewalk toward the Four Aces.

CUT TO:

## INT. FOUR ACES - NIGHT

Van Dorn pulls the bleeding Tod into the Four Aces, a low-life strip club.

A dozen solo patrons are scattered around the dimly lit bar. On stage, a couple performs a routine sex simulation act to a scratchy Barry White record.

CUT TO:

## EXT. HOUSE OF BONDAGE - NIGHT

Two police cars, dome lights flashing, pull up in front of the House of Bondage. Mast's car pulls up behind them.

CUT TO:

## INT. FOUR ACES - NIGHT

A man wearing a white suit sits at a table with several girls. He immediately recognizes Tod. This is RATAN. The man who killed the young Mexican and girl in the film.

Ratan starts to rise. Jake drops Tod and heads toward Ratan.

A girl wearing a skimpy halter stands up between Ratan and Jake. She turns and looks back at Jake: it is Kristen.

She is terrified. Kristen turns and runs away, stumbling over a chair.

Ratan rushes toward the front door.

In the same instant Jake sees Kristen falling, Ratan fleeing.

Trying to get around Jake, Ratan flashes his stiletto forward.

A gash razors across Jake's upper chest.

Ratan's stiletto flashes forward: Jake's arm is cut. Jake clasps Ratan and thrusts him backward.

CUT TO:

EXT. FOUR ACES - NIGHT

The street fills with SIRENS, flashing light and police.

Mast rushes toward The Four Aces. Niki follows.

CUT TO:

INT. FOUR ACES - NIGHT

Jake rams Ratan backward into the smoke-colored front window.

Ratan's back smashes through the plate glass. Ratan's feet lift off the floor as he falls backward.

Sinking backward against the broken glass, Ratan swings his stiletto at Jake.

Jake, protecting himself from the knife, flips Ratan over.

Ratan's chest and stomach rasp across the jagged glass.

Jake grabs Ratan's head in both his hands and forces it downward onto the bottom edge of the jagged window frame.

He rubs Ratan's neck across the glass: every artery, vein and capillary rip out of Ratan's neck.

Ratan collapses against the window frame.

TWO OFFICERS, guns drawn, rush toward Ratan's body. The Second Officer pulls out his handcuffs, then realizes it will not be needed.

Jake turns and heads toward where he last saw Kristen.

The First Officer aims his gun at Jake and calls out:

FIRST OFFICER

Halt!

Mast and plainclothes officer (Joe Klein), rush over and instruct the Officers to ease off.

Jake walks across the now empty bar. Several tables are overturned.

Jake walks to the table where Kristen tripped. Following her logical path, Jake walks into the women's rest room.

CUT TO:

INT. REST ROOM - NIGHT

Kristen squeezes herself against the yellow rest room wall.

Trembling, she holds her twisted ankle and looks at her father in fear.

Jake takes off his torn coat and drapes it over his daughter's shoulders. She tries not to look at him.

KRISTEN

Don't hurt me.

JAKE

Come on, Kristen. Let's go home.

He helps her up.

CUT TO:

EXT. O'FARRELL - NIGHT

Flashing red and yellow lights illuminate the chaos:

- Curious mobs press against police lines.
- Ambulance attendants lift Ratan's body onto a stretcher.
- The two officers handcuff a bloodied and confused Tod.
- Police officers interview Hope, Faith and other bystanders.

Mast walks over to Jake and Kristen. Niki watches from a distance.

JAKE

There's another one. Tod. In the club.

Mast watches the ambulance attendants cover Ratan's body. Jake leads Kristen to a police car and places her in the rear seat.

Jake sees Niki in the crowd. She is watching Jake and Kristen. She knows she no longer has a place in his life.

He walks over to her.

JAKE

Niki, maybe I can... There's probably some way to...

Niki does what Jake cannot: she breaks the connection.

NIKI

(ice cold)

You got your daughter. I got my money. So now fuck off.

Niki turns on her heel and walks into the neon darkness.

Jake walks back to Mast.

JAKE

Andy, can you do something for her? Maybe money...

MAST

Go home, pilgrim. There's nothing you can do. Forget this place. Start over.

Jake walks back to where his daughter waits for him.

The MUSIC turns into an orchestrated version of "Precious Memories."

DISSOLVE TO:

MONTAGE

As the MUSIC RISES we DISSOLVE BETWEEN:

– Wes, Anne and Marsha welcome Kristen back in their home. Anne embraces her tearfully.

– Jake, back at work, talks to Mary near the lathes.

– Niki, wearing white vinyl boots and a blonde wig, walks the streets of Los Angeles.

– Kristen lies sleeping peacefully in her bedroom.

– Jake sleeps. Blue light falls across his face.

Slowly, burning through his face, the grainy black and white image of a girl wearing a black mask appears. A hand reaches down to pull off the mask.

Jake wakes suddenly from his dream, his screaming face double-exposed with the terrified young girl's.

FADE OUT:

THE END