

"NURSE BETTY"

Screenplay by

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Based on a story by

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Shooting Script (FINAL)

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FADE IN:

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

A tense surgery in progress. Meters flicker, instruments flash in the bright overhead light. In the midst of it all stands DR. DAVID RAVELL, 35. The master of his domain. Ravell leans forward so a NURSE can mop the sweat from his brow as he completes a last, delicate procedure. His co workers sigh collectively with relief.

DAVID
(to Asst. Surgeon)
Close her up, will you?

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Dr. Ravell comes out of surgery, clearly exhausted. Without his surgical mask he is ruggedly handsome. TWO NURSES follow, attending him like a fighter fresh from the ring: CHLOE, 25, Raven-haired and striking, and JASMINE, 24, an exotic mix of African-American and Asian.

BLAKE DANIELS, 58, the silver-haired Chief Surgeon, rushes up the corridor. On his heels is DR. LONNIE WALSH, 33. Lonnie is also conspicuously handsome, but he'll always be second to David. In everything. The look on Blake's face stops David in his tracks.

BLAKE

There's been a train crash near Santa Barbara. They're flying an aortal trauma here now. How can I ask you this, David...

David rubs his eyes. Thinks about it.

DAVID

I can do it, Blake.

His bravery isn't lost on the two nurses, although Chloe exchanges a quick, covert glance with Lonnie.

CHLOE

Is he crazy, Jasmine? He's been on his feet for fourteen hours.

JASMINE

Chloe, it's been this way since Leslie died. Losing himself in his work, poor thing...

YOUNGER MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

...I'll give you something to lose yourself in...

OLDER MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

Excuse me, miss?

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: WE ARE LOOKING AT A TELEVISION SCREEN BEHIND THE COUNTER OF A SMALL-TOWN DINER.

INSERT: FAIR OAKS, KANSAS

INT. TIP TOP DINER - DAY

Quaint, Midwestern eatery. Knick-knacks and photos abound. The booths and counter are packed with LOCALS. A family dining section off in one corner.

TWO GUYS sitting at the counter in team jackets. The older of the two holds up his empty coffee cup. But his WAITRESS, standing a couple seats down from him, doesn't move. She's completely absorbed in watching the soap opera that plays on two battered, fuzzy TV sets. BETTY SIZEMORE, 30, has a

wholesome attractiveness that competes with a bit too much makeup and a cheesy white waitress uniform. TWO OTHER WAITRESSES attend to customers behind her. The younger of the two guys is involved in the soap opera. But the older one, still wants coffee. He gestures toward Betty.

OLDER MAN

Miss?

Betty leans forward, grabs the coffee pot and moves in front of him. Without taking her eyes from the TV, she pours the java, which somehow lands in his cup without spilling a drop.

OLDER MAN

Very impressive. That is very...

(turning to others)

Did anybody see that?

The LOCAL GUYS around him don't even bother to look up. Of course, they've seen it before. Betty smiles.

OLDER MAN

Thank you. Could I bother you for a little more...?

Before he can even finish, Betty is topping him off with milk.

BETTY

Skim, right?

(tears open an Equal)

And half a pack, if I remember correct...

The older gentleman's mouth works a bit but nothing comes out. He is flabbergasted by her attention to detail. She looks at the younger man, who is still following the show and gobbling down a huge bacon burger.

BETTY

You know, you're never too young to start on a lean meat substitute...

(BEAT)

You wanna try some turkey bacon on that?

YOUNGER MAN

You want a tip when I'm through?

BETTY

It's your body...

Betty turns back to change pots. The older man watches her intently as the younger of the two mumbles to himself.

YOUNGER MAN

(to himself)

That's right, so why don't you get up off it...

OLDER MAN

Wesley...

(to Betty)

I've told him the same thing. Thanks for the suggestion.

BETTY

No problem.

Betty flashes the men a winning smile and moves off, one eye always on the TV as she approaches two local types.

SHERIFF ELDEN BALLARD, 32, a short, tightly wound little man, sitting at his own booth. Ballard is spit and polish all the way: creases in his shirt, a glossy shine on his shoes. Badge proudly displayed. He sits with ROY OSTREY, 31, a gangly, bookish local reporter. Betty drops five ketchup packets and four mayonnaise packets on the table for him. Another smile.

ROY

Hi, Betty. You're looking good...

BETTY

Thanks, Roy, you're sweet... a big liar, but sweet. I liked your editorial this morning...

ROY

Oh, appreciate it. I was trying to, ahh, give a sense of history to...

BALLARD

(interrupting)

Yeah, it was great. Really put the whole idea of "church bake sales" in perspective...

ROY

You know, Elden, some people actually read more than just the Classifieds...

BALLARD

Why don't you go back to doing something you're good at... like that Lonelyhearts column?

(chuckles to himself)

I'll take a refill there, Betty...

His cup is full before he can even finish the sentence.

BETTY

Hey, Sheriff. How's everything?

BALLARD

Oh, you know, the usual... keeping the world safe.

BETTY

...I meant your food.

BALLARD

Oh, right... 's fine. Thanks.

ROY

I thought you said the eggs weren't...

BALLARD

It's fine. Mind your own meal...

ROY

You should get the order you want.

BALLARD

And you should keep your nose out of another man's omelette...

(to Betty)

It's no big deal, Betty.

BETTY

There's yolks in there, huh? It's no prob'... gotta keep you on track.

Betty grabs Ballard's plate without another word, gives him a reassuring rub on the shoulders and moves off. He smiles appreciatively after her, then turns on Roy.

BALLARD

Why you always gotta embarrass me? I been eating lunch with you since grade school and you always gotta embarrass me!

ROY

They're just eggs, Elden, how embarrassing can eggs be?

BALLARD

...plenty

ROY

Who eats eggs for lunch, anyhow?

BALLARD

Mind your own business. You just said that shit so you could look at her a little longer, anyway...

Still carrying Ballard's plate, she returns to the counter.

BETTY

Come on, guys, I told you it's egg whites only for the Sheriff...

(quietly)

...I put him in that 'zone' thing.

COOK #1

Well, it better be a pretty good size zone if he's in it...

Betty and the cooks share a quick laugh. They move to change his order while Betty glances up at the TV.

INT. HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - RETURN TO TV SCREEN

Lonnie catches up to Blake in the corridor.

LONNIE

Blake, I can handle that transplant!

BLAKE

We need someone with the right kind of experience, Lonnie.

LONNIE

Even if he's falling asleep on his feet?

BLAKE

Lonnie, it's a complex procedure. Why don't you observe?

LONNIE

I'm not some snot-nosed resident fresh out of medical school, Blake.

BLAKE

No, you're not. You're a good doctor, Lonnie, but you're not David Ravell. I've made my decision. Now, if you'll excuse me...

Blake exits. The camera moves in to hold on a CLOSEUP of Lonnie's face as he simmers in anger. Music soars.

INT. TIP TOP DINER - DAY

Plates of food are piling up on the shelf in front of the COOKS. One of them turns the TV off by remote.

BETTY

Hey! We were watching that!

COOK #1

The other girls've got orders up... we're not one 'a them goddamn Nelson families, y'know.

Betty snatches up several plates to help out. Ballard's food appears with A CLATTER of porcelain.

BETTY
It's "Nielson" ...

COOK #1
Yeah, well, we ain't one 'a them,
neither.
(BEAT)
Go on now...

DARLENE
When you gonna get those things fixed,
anyhow?

COOK #1
When you all quit watching 'em for a
living...

Frustrated, Betty delivers several plates and drops them at tables where the people know her by name. She moves off toward FOUR LOCAL GUYS in a booth jangling their empty cups. Betty weaves her way over to them and pours refills. When a hand strays around to touch her ass, she pushes it away with her foot and keeps right on pouring. Absently, Betty takes a look around the restaurant. The other waitresses are gone and no one is behind the grill. Alarmed, she pushes through the double doors into the kitchen.

INT. TIP TOP DINER - KITCHEN - SAME TIME

THREE WAITRESSES, along with the DISHWASHER and TWO COOKS are standing in a row waiting for her.

BETTY
...alright, I get it, no more TV.
Sorry.

No one moves, then DARLENE leads them in a huge SURPRISE! They produce a life-size cardboard cut-out of Dr. David Ravell, who looks dashing in his green hospital scrubs. Betty backs up in disbelief.

BETTY
Oh my gosh, this is so embarrassing!
Where did you ever find this?

DARLENE

On the goddamn internet, where else?

BETTY

You're joking...

WAITRESS #1

...nope, got him at "T.V. Hunks with Sweet Little Asses.Com."

WAITRESS #2

Seventy-five dollars...

COOK #1

...Seventy-eight fifty.

(everyone looks at
him)

Well, I paid for the damn thing, I oughta know.

WAITRESS #2

C'mon, Betty! Pose with him!

Betty laughs and puts her arm around the cardboard man. A flash photo is taken. A cupcake with a single candle is placed in her hands.

DARLENE

One candle... uh-oh, you're getting up there! Doesn't David like 'em young?

BETTY

I'm over the hill, what can I say?

Darlene gives Betty an envelope with cash showing.

WAITRESS #1

A little something for those nursing classes you've been wanting to take...

DARLENE

...but keep putting off thanks to a certain husband we won't mention...

BETTY

Oh, guys, you didn't have to do that!

DARLENE

So how you gonna celebrate? Del takin' you into Wichita for a big fancy dinner?

The others laugh; they know better. So does Betty.

BETTY

Yeah, Dairy Queen, maybe... Oh, I should probably call him. Thanks, you guys...

COOK #1

Alright, alright, come on... I'm not running no bed & breakfast, we got customers. Let's go...

Smiling, Betty grabs a wall phone as the others mingle about.

INT. SIZEMORE MOTORS - DEL'S OFFICE - DAY

The trailer/office of a small-time car dealership. As the PHONE RINGS, the CAMERA PANS across pictures of DEL SIZEMORE, 35, dressed as Napoleon, Caesar and Abe Lincoln, arms raised in a high-energy sales pitch.

The PHONE RINGS again. We see a framed certificate of achievement from General Motors, dated 1986.

After the THIRD RING an ANSWERING MACHINE clicks on. It's loud.

ANSWERING MACHINE

(Del's voice)

Hello there! You've reached Sizemore Motors, home of the best selection of used General Motors cars in the Big Springs – Fair Oaks area. We can't come to the phone right now 'cause we're out making a sale, so leave us a message; better yet, come on down and steal one 'a these beauties right out from under us! Coffee's always on!

BETTY (V.O.)
Hi Del, it's me. I guess you're busy.

INT. SIZEMORE MOTORS - TRAILER/OFFICE - DAY

Del's very busy. He's on the rented sofa in the trailer's lounge, screwing his secretary, JOYCE. But as he rocks the couch, he's listening to Betty's message.

BETTY (V.O.)
I know you want the Oldsmobile back tonight, so... I was wondering if I could take one of the new Buicks.

Del pulls out and lurches across the room. He reaches for the desk phone but misses, spilling down onto the carpet. He gathers himself and his pants up in disgust, pawing around the desktop until he finds the phone.

BETTY (V.O.)
So, call me when you –

DEL
Whoa, whoa, whoa! Hang on a second there, baby. Why do you need one of the new Buicks?

BETTY (V.O.)
Oh, you're there. You sound out of breath.

DEL
I ran back in to get the phone.

The answering machine is on, so their VOICES are BOOMING. The phone cord is stretched across the trailer as he tries to get back to Joyce. He motions for her to join him but she remains where she is, fuming.

BETTY (V.O.)
I don't need one, but it's kind of a special night, and –

DEL
What's so special about it?

LONG PAUSE. Joyce looks at Del, incredulous. Then pissed off. He signals to hold on.

BETTY (V.O.)

Sue Ann's taking me out and I thought
it might be fun to go in a nice car...

Joyce wriggles to a sitting position and begins to pull up her panties. Del shoots her a look that says 'I'm not finished yet!' They pantomime frantically back and forth until Joyce throws him the finger and SLAMS out the door.

BETTY (V.O.)

What was that?

DEL

Nothing... it's, ahh, busy here.
Look, you don't need a LeSabre to go
out with Sue Ann. Take the blue
Corsica. I'll see you when I get
home.

He throws the phone onto the cradle, then bangs on a window to get Joyce's attention as she fires up a smoke.

DEL

(through the pane)

Shit! Joyce, open the damn gate,
will you?!

As Del zips up his pants Joyce trudges across the lot to bring in the "Closed For Lunch" sign and open the gate. Del silently studies the much nicer car lot next door for a moment. He takes in the banners, the signs, etc.

DEL

...that's what we need, some goddamn
flags.

INT. OFFICE/TRAILER - LATER

Betty enters the office. Joyce is on the phone. She looks up, irritated, and says something under her breath to the caller.

JOYCE

Uhh, no, we haven't picked a date yet... well, once he dumps her we will.

(to Betty)

He's out pricing banners... I don't expect him back.

BETTY

"Banners?"

JOYCE

You know, flags and shit... he said "for a livelier look" or something.

Betty nods and swaps her car keys for a set Joyce gives her.

JOYCE

'S too bad about the LeSabres... they're a really sweet ride.

As Joyce prattles on, Betty notices the Buick LeSabre keys on a rack behind her. She sidles around Joyce, deftly removes a set from the hook and drops them in her purse. She smiles and starts to wave goodbye as Joyce puts her call on hold.

JOYCE

Need something else?

BETTY

No, I was just... How you doing?

JOYCE

Great. Good. Content...

BETTY

Oh. How come?

JOYCE

I dunno. Job satisfaction, I guess...

(BEAT)

How's things at the Tip Top?

BETTY

They're fine... you miss it?

JOYCE
You must be joking.

BETTY
Hmm.
(BEAT)
So, Del get that car he sold you up
and running yet?

JOYCE
Oh, yeah, he's got things up and
running, alright...

BETTY
'Kay, good. Bye, then...

JOYCE
Uh-huh.
(back to phone)
Anyway, I'm thinking Easter, 'cause
I just fucking love pastels.

She whispers, then laughs loudly as Betty leaves.

EXT. SIZEMORE MOTORS - DAY

The cardboard doctor is standing next to Betty's Olds. She thinks about leaving him, but picks him up and tosses him into a blue Corsica. He lands with his face against the passenger window.

She stands for a moment by the Corsica, dangling the LeSabre keys before her eyes. Suddenly, she jumps inside the Chevrolet and slams the door.

EXT. SIZEMORE MOTORS/TRAILER PARK - DAY

The blue Corsica leaves the parking lot and pulls onto the street. The car makes an abrupt turn into a trailer park directly behind the car lot and glides to a halt behind a row of battered airstreams.

Betty gets out of the Chevy and looks back: the handsome face of Doctor David Ravell is staring at her from the car.

BETTY

Oh, Christ, what am I gonna do with you?

She goes back to pick him up, then starts off.

EXT. TRAILER PARK - SAME TIME

A row of cheap trailers on both sides of a crumbling driveway. Betty appears with her cardboard man tucked under one arm and then disappears behind a pickup truck.

EXT. SIZEMORE MOTORS - SAME TIME

She tosses the cardboard "David" over a concrete slab wall, climbs over herself and walks straight to the LeSabres. Her key opens the last one – maroon. She puts the doctor on the passenger seat, gets in the car and inhales the new car smell.

Joyce can be seen inside the trailer, still talking on the phone. She misses the whole scene as she works on her nails.

BETTY

We deserve this.

INT. LESABRE - DRIVING - DAY

Betty has the car at 75 m.p.h., on the rural Kansas roads, wheat fields for miles on both sides of her. The RADIO is blasting Bonnie Raitt and she's singing along.

She sees her speed and punches the accelerator... 80 m.p.h.... 85... 90 m.p.h. She turns the radio up louder.

When she approaches a sign saying "You are leaving Kansas" Betty suddenly becomes self-conscious. She eases up on the gas... slows down... does a U-turn and heads back toward Fair Oaks. She glances wistfully in her rear view mirror at the billboard that quickly fades into the distance.

EXT. BETTY'S NEIGHBORHOOD - LATER

Betty enters a modest residential neighborhood and pulls into a driveway. She parks in a detached garage and looks over at the cardboard David. There's no way he's going in the house. She puts him in the trunk and closes the garage door.

EXT. SUE ANN'S HOUSE - SAME TIME

She walks several houses down. On her way to the door we hear a DOG BARKING, CHILDREN and GENERAL COMMOTION from inside. SUE ANN ROGERS answers Betty's knock. Her hair is matted with sweat as she struggles with CHILDREN, ages 4, 3 and 6 months. Suddenly, Sue Ann is hit by an errant rubber ball.

SUE ANN

Hey, darling... oww! Sorry, got my own little Gulf War going on here.

Betty takes the baby as Sue Ann pulls a videotape from a shelf. It's all one move; they do this every day.

BETTY

Did you watch it yet?

SUE ANN

Sure did. I'll tell you, if that man was any better looking it'd be a crime 'a some sort...

BETTY

Yep. Hey, I got a surprise for tonight. We're going to the Starlite in style!

SUE ANN

Oh, Betty –

BETTY

I'll give you a hint. If you scrunch up your eyes a bit it looks just like a Jaguar...

SUE ANN

Honey, I'm really sorry, I was gonna call you about tonight. Larry's got a lodge meeting. There's no way I can get a sitter this fast.

BETTY

(disappointed)

No... what about your sister?

SUE ANN

I can't ask her again – Nathan,
stop it! Jesse, don't take that, hit
back! – I feel terrible, hon.

After a beat...

BETTY

It's all right.

SUE ANN

You sure? Maybe next week we could...

BETTY

Uh-huh. No, we'll do it later. 'S
only a birthday, right? I'll have
another one next year...

Betty forces a smile, kisses the baby and hands it back to
Sue Ann, who hands her the videotape.

SUE ANN

Aahhh...

(BEAT)

So what color is it?

BETTY

What?

SUE ANN

The LeSabre!

BETTY

Maroon.

(BEAT)

I stole it.

SUE ANN

What?

BETTY

He wasn't going to let us use it, so
I just took it.

SUE ANN

Oh, I wish we could just get in it
and drive, and drive, and drive!

BETTY

Yeah, me too.

SUE ANN

Sorry, hon. Happy Birthday...

BETTY

I gotta go make dinner.

Betty throws her a look as Sue Ann closes the door. Betty turns around, frustrated. She starts yanking her apron off as she crosses the street.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DAY

A low-end ranch. A worn-out sofa and loveseat form an 'L' that dominates the living room. Romance novels line a small bookcase. SIX CANARIES in cages chatter away in the kitchen.

Del sits at the dining room table, agitated. He is presently attacking a pork chop, baked beans and a loaf of Wonderbread. All we hear is A FORK CLICKING and BIRDS CHIRPING. Betty stands at the breakfast counter, barefoot, still in her uniform and quietly eating a salad.

BETTY

Sure you don't want any salad?

DEL

No, I do not want any goddamn...
what was all that shit on the phone
about the new Buicks?

BETTY

I told you. Sue Ann was gonna take
me out tonight, but...

DEL

She's not comfortable in a Corsica?
'S got air and leather...

BETTY

I took the blue Corsica, Del. Relax.

DEL

All right, then. Actually, I'm glad you're going out. I got something going on tonight. Some serious clients, with real potential.

Del BELCHES, smiles, then CLUCKS at the birds nearby.

BETTY

...like the water purifiers?

DEL

What?

BETTY

Or the vitamins? Or the...?

Del almost comes out of his chair, pointing his finger at her.

DEL

Hey, the FDA screwed me on that when they changed the law, and you know it!

(BEAT)

Anyway, 'least I try shit, still got some dreams left... you're a goddamn waitress, what do you got?

BETTY

I got you, Del...

DEL

...well, then you ain't got much.

BETTY

Oh, I know.

(BEAT)

So, who're these clients?

DEL

Couple 'a guys in from outta town. They want to see the new LeSabres.

Betty hides her reaction.

DEL

And I don't need Sue Ann's fat ass
around to fuck it up...

BETTY

Just knock it off, 'kay? Anyhow,
they're 97's, they're not even new.

DEL

They're new to us...

Truce for a moment. Del plucks a copy of Soap Opera Guide
from Betty's purse while absently taking a bite from Betty's
cupcake. He narrowly misses the candle.

DEL

Jesus... you know these actors are
mainly models, which are mainly fags.
They've done studies. The rest're
assholes. But you know what bugs me
most about these soaps?

She silently mimics him as he says...

DEL

It's people with no lives watching
other people's fake lives.

BETTY

Yeah, I guess there's nothing like
watching those tenpins fall, huh,
Del?

DEL

That is a skill!

Del lurches to his feet and crosses to the bird cages as the
canaries CHIRP and SING EXCITEDLY at his approach.

DEL

Daddy's here, babies... daddy's here.
(to Betty)
Be back later... clean up.

He exits. She collects his dirty dishes, puts them in the sink and starts to wash them. Then she stops.

BETTY

What the hell am I doing?

She drops the dishes with a clatter, pours herself a glass of wine, lights the candle on her deflowered cupcake and opens the one card on the table.

CLOSE ON

a traditional greeting from her grandparents. Red hearts and lace. A color photo of them enclosed.

Betty smiles at this. After moment, she quietly sings a quick refrain of "Happy Birthday" to herself.

INT. LONNIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (ON TV SCREEN)

Standing wrapped only in a towel, Lonnie speaks into the phone.

LONNIE

Tell me something good, Sugar.

INT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (ON TV SCREEN)

The beautiful nurse Chloe is curled up seductively on her sofa with her phone in one hand and a cigarette in the other.

CHLOE

We're all set. I told him my car's in the shop. He said he'd be happy to give me a ride home.

LONNIE (V.O.)

You're beautiful.

CHLOE

Tell me something I don't know...

Betty hits FAST FORWARD. Characters flit on and off the screen at top speed until David Ravell appears.

INT. WOODED ROADSIDE - NIGHT (ON TV SCREEN)

Chloe's magnificent legs are folded into the seat of David's 560 SL. She struggles with her seatbelt, so he helps her. She makes sure their hands touch.

CHLOE

Thanks for pulling over, David... I can't go that fast without taking a breather.

DAVID

Sorry... it's nice to see what this little beauty can do, though. I guess, somehow, all that speed helps me forget the past...

CHLOE

I'm sure it does...
(touching the seats)
Mmm, leather. How far do they recline?

David smiles, a little uncomfortable.

CHLOE

Listen, David, I know I've said it before, but I want to tell you again how sorry I am about your wife.

(BEAT)

It must make you scared to get close to someone again.

She puts her hand over his on the gear shift. A moment. Finally, he has to move her fingers to start the car.

CHLOE

Let's not go... not yet.

BETTY sits on an old couch in the den and watches, eyes glued to the screen. Suddenly, she hears the sound of TIRES ON GRAVEL. HEADLIGHTS sweep across the window.

BETTY

Damn!

She hits PAUSE and crosses to look out.

EXT. BETTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Del gets out of a black Lincoln Town Car, followed by CHARLIE and WESLEY – the guys in the team jackets from the diner. Charlie is 63 years old. He wears a dress shirt, slacks and docksiders. The suburban father look.

Wesley is 28. He's in jeans, T-shirt and white Reeboks. Clean cut; the kid who used to mow your parents' lawn.

Betty quickly snaps out the light and closes the door until it is open only a crack.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Del swaggers into the house. The two men follow politely.

DEL

...you can have the best damn running backs in the world, somebody's still gotta block for 'em.

CHARLIE

You're a hundred percent right. They rely on what's-his-name's arm too much...

Del stops and looks around, deflated by the mess.

The den is only a short flight of steps from the living room and the kitchen. Betty has a clean view of both from where she sits on the couch.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

She hears Del come in, but doesn't take her eyes off the TV screen.

DEL (O.S.)

My apologies, gentlemen. I asked my wife to straighten this shit up before she went out.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Del crosses to an old stereo and puts on an LP. He smiles as

the music overtakes the room. Charlie and Wesley stand nearby, appreciating the quaintness of the surroundings.

DEL

Now, what can I get you gentlemen to drink?

Del crosses to the cupboard. Charlie and Wesley stand leisurely in the living room.

CHARLIE

Bourbon, little water, thank you.

WESLEY

Beer, please.

DEL

You got it.

Wesley looks at a wedding portrait of Del and Betty.

WESLEY

Hey... you got a fine one right here!

CHARLIE

Wesley...
(to Del)
Your wife's a very lovely woman.
Have I seen her before?

DEL

If you ate at the Tip Top you did.

CHARLIE

Oh, yes, with the coffee...

DEL

Yep, Betty pours a pretty mean cup.

Del reaches into the fridge and produces a Miller for Wesley, then mixes two drinks and walks into the dining room and Charlie and Wesley follow to the table and sit down.

CHARLIE

I like this. I like doing business
in the home. It's cozy...

(noticing the card
and cupcake)
Who's birthday?

DEL
Ahh... my wife's.

WESLEY
What'd you get her?

DEL
Huh? Oh, umm, a car.
(BEAT)
So, to a successful transaction...

They raise their glasses and drink. Del tosses back his drink
in one gulp.

INT. DAVID'S CAR - WOODED ROADSIDE - (ON TV SCREEN)

Chloe is on top of David, kissing him on the mouth as he
resists. He finally has to push her away forcibly, and we
hear a TEARING SOUND. Chloe's blouse has been ripped.

DAVID
I'm sorry, Chloe.

She starts to cry. David reaches out to comfort her.

DAVID
It's not that I don't find you
attractive. I'm just not ready...

David looks up to find her lips on his. In spite of himself,
he gives in to the warmth of her kiss and responds hungrily.

Betty is mesmerized.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The men have retired into the dining room, sitting or standing
around a worn wooded table. Charlie and Wesley are just
finishing their drinks.

DEL
All right gentlemen, let's get down

to it. I need to know if you're for real.

CHARLIE
If we're for real?

DEL
You don't exactly look like drug dealers.

WESLEY
Isn't that the point?

DEL
Yeah, well, I don't have time to screw around. I got buyers in Dallas, Houston and Vegas who are ready to snap this stuff up.

CHARLIE
We appreciate that. But you just poured me a drink, I'd like to enjoy your hospitality for a few minutes.

DEL
Fine. You got five...

CHARLIE
It's a nice place you got here. Real comfortable. Sweet little town, Fair Oaks. You like it here?

DEL
(laughs)
Are you kidding me? What's to like?

WESLEY
Seems like a nice place.

DEL
It is, if you like idiots...

CHARLIE
What do you mean?

DEL

It's a small town, man. I never should have left Omaha. People here think small. They act small. They're a bunch of dumb fucks.

WESLEY
Really?

DEL
You better believe it.

CHARLIE
Could you give us an example?

DEL
Of what?

CHARLIE
I'm asking you for an example of one of these dumb fucks being a dumb fuck.

DEL
I don't follow...

CHARLIE
You're not a dumb fuck, are you, Del?

DEL
(warily)
No...

CHARLIE
I didn't think so. So, give me an example of a stupid person doing a stupid thing. Not being stupid, you're equipped to recognize it.

DEL
Are we gonna do business here, or not?

WESLEY
Relax, we brought the cash.

CHARLIE

I'm just curious. Can't you give me an example?

DEL

(annoyed)

All right... lemme see... okay, new Burger King opens up. These assholes get excited and start lining up. Like it's some five star restaurant. The place is mobbed. Right?

CHARLIE

Hmmmm. "Five Stars," huh?

(BEAT)

Is that stupid, Wesley?

WESLEY

No, that's ignorant. They just don't know any better.

CHARLIE

That's what I thought.

(to Del)

You better give me another example.

DEL

This is bullshit, can we get down to business here, please?

Off a look from Charlie, Wesley produces a pistol and gently nudges the barrel into Del's ear.

DEL

Jesus Christ!

WESLEY

He's waiting...

DEL

Okay, uh... the, umm, Injuns're stupid.

WESLEY

"Injuns?"

CHARLIE

You did not just say "Injuns," Del.

DEL

The Indians, Injuns, whatever. They're always drunk and doing stupid things.

CHARLIE

Like what?

DEL

Driving their cars into trees...
puking on the sidewalk... stupid
shit!

CHARLIE

Let's see... around here that would
be Kiowa, Kickapoo or Osage, if I'm
not mistaken.

DEL

I... I don't know...

CHARLIE

Well, my idea of stupid is very
different from yours.

(BEAT)

So here's how this is gonna work.
Would you take your socks off, please?

DEL

My socks?

WESLEY

You heard the man.

Del slowly takes his shoes and socks off. He's sweating,
trembling.

CHARLIE

I'm gonna talk to you and when I'm
finished, you can answer. But I don't
like being interrupted. Now roll
them into a ball...

Del does it.

DEL

Oh, Jesus, please... Please, God.

CHARLIE

..and put them in your mouth.

At a sharp look from Charlie, Del obediently stuffs the socks into his mouth and starts to cry. Wesley produces a roll of duct tape and fastens Del's hands to the back of his chair.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Betty is glued to the TV, oblivious to the men. Chloe and David are still talking in his car. She continues to cry.

DAVID (V.O.)

You're wonderful, Chloe, you are...
But I just know there's something
special out there for me.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

CHARLIE

Now I'm gonna tell you what stupid
is. Stupid is taking something that
doesn't belong to you. Right Wesley?

WESLEY

That's right.

CHARLIE

Stupid is trying to sell it to other
people who are, by their very nature,
untrustworthy.

WESLEY

That is so right.

CHARLIE

Stupid is calling people in Kansas
City who are affiliated with the
rightful owners of the thing you
stole, and trying to sell it to them.
Right Wesley?

WESLEY
Now, that's really stupid.

CHARLIE
So you see, we have totally different ideas of what's stupid and what's not. Don't we?

Del nods; crying, sweating.

CHARLIE
Good. Now we're getting somewhere. You agree that you were stupid?

Del nods again. Wesley collects Charlie's glass and mixes him another drink. He gets a beer for himself and stands behind Del. Charlie sips his drink slowly, savoring it.

CHARLIE
You know, a hundred and fifty years ago you'd have been scalped for that remark about Native Americans. Right here where your house is – you'd have been scalped.

WESLEY
Hell of a way to die.

CHARLIE
It wasn't always fatal, Wesley. We could scalp Del right now, and he'd be plenty alive to tell us how it feels.

Del's eyes get huge.

CHARLIE
It's pretty simple, too.
(BEAT)
First you take a knife and just draw a mark right across the hairline.

Wesley produces a long knife and traces a line across the very top of Del's forehead. Trickle of blood wind their way down his brow. Del is MOANING and PANTING through his socks.

CHARLIE

Hold still, Del, we're just talking here...

(pointing to a spot)

Then you grab a big handful of hair and pull as you cut. It's amazing how easily the scalp comes off.

WESLEY

A mark, huh?

Wesley takes a jab at Del's forehead with his knife, leaving a small cut.

Del starts twitching, rocking back and forth as Wesley grabs a fistful of his hair.

WESLEY

Shut the fuck up! I bleed more than that when I shave...

Del stops moving. He breathes furiously through his nostrils.

CHARLIE

Now. I want to know the particulars of your stupid act: how you got what doesn't belong to you, who helped you get it, and of course, where it is now.

Charlie pulls the socks out of Del's mouth. Del splutters, gasping for air.

DEL

It's in the Buick! I swear to God it's all there!

INT. BLAKE DANIELS' OFFICE - DAY (ON TV SCREEN)

David enters. Blake nods to him grimly.

DAVID

You wanted to see me, Blake?

BLAKE

I wish I could say I had good news.

(off David's look)
David, I'll get right to the point.
Chloe Jensen has filed charges of
sexual assault against you.

(BEAT)

You can continue to practice at L.A.
County, but I'm afraid I have to
revoke your privileges here at Loma
Vista until this is resolved.

HOLD on David's shocked expression... MUSIC UP AS

DEL (O.S.)
PLEASE DON'T KILL ME!!!

Betty's not sure what Del said, but the panic in his voice
got through. She hits PAUSE and takes a look.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Del is facing her, tiny rivulets of blood running into his
terrified eyes. Wesley stands at his shoulder, still holding
a handful of his hair, still poised with the knife.

DEL
I got it from a truck driver named
Duane Cooley, out of Amarillo. He
brings my cars down from Detroit.
But I haven't touched it, I swear to
you... Please! Please! Please!

Annoyed, Charlie stuffs the socks back in Del's mouth.

Betty stares. Her gaze shifts from Del to Wesley, drawn by
Wesley's demonic expression.

CHARLIE
Consider yourself lucky. Luckier
than those 'Injuns' you have such
contempt for.

Wesley stares at the top of Del's head. Betty stares at
Wesley. Charlie walks into the kitchen for another drink.

CHARLIE
I'll tell you, if anyone got a raw

deal it's the American Indian. This country has a black mark on its soul for what was done to them.

Wesley's nostrils flare. Betty leans forward.

CHARLIE

I'm all for them owning casinos, getting rich off the white man's greed. It's a beautiful piece of irony, isn't it, Wesley?

WESLEY

IT SURE IS!!

And with a long SCREAM, Wesley rips Del's scalp from his head. It makes a sickening sound like fabric tearing. For a long moment, there is only silence. An eerie silence.

Suddenly, Del SCREAMS into his socks and thrashes in his seat, blood pouring down his head on all sides.

Somehow, he manages to get to his feet, the chair still taped to him, and begins smashing into whatever is near. Blood flies and curios shatter as Del thunders through the room. A dying bull, only messier. It's quite a show.

CHARLIE

JESUS CHRIST!!!

Wesley steps back, staring at the dripping scalp in his hand, as if wondering how it got there. Betty is transfixed, horrified.

Charlie re-enters. The two men look at each other over Del's MUFFLED SCREAMS as he plows headlong into wooden paneling, a china cabinet, and finally, back toward them near the breakfast counter. Del bashes blindly into it.

CHARLIE

(to Wesley)

What the fuck is the matter with you?!

Wesley is practically foaming at the mouth, still rushing on what he did. Charlie draws a silenced pistol and mercifully

SHOOTS Del through the head. The big man stops suddenly, blinks once or twice, topples over.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Betty points her remote at the dining room and clicks it, as if trying to make the image disappear. Finally, she gives up, slowly turning away from the carnage and aims at the TV. "A Reason to Love" pauses on the face of David Ravell and Betty sits in absolute silence.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Charlie quickly begins to hide their tracks, producing a plastic baggie and collecting the beer cans and his own glass. He also wipes down the fridge as Wesley watches.

CHARLIE

Are you out of your mind? You scalped him!

WESLEY

You told me how to do it!

CHARLIE

That was to get him to talk!

(BEAT)

Get rid of that thing, will you?

Wesley crosses to the garbage can, steps on the lever. He looks at the scalp one more time before dropping it in.

CHARLIE

This is great – just great! Now we don't know where the goddamn stuff is.

WESLEY

He told us it's in the Buick.

CHARLIE

We don't know which Buick, do we?

WESLEY

Well, why'd you shoot him?

CHARLIE

I had to shoot him! It was the only decent thing to do.

They exit the house.

CHARLIE

This is very unprofessional, Wesley.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DEN - NIGHT

Betty is still in the family room, staring at the TV. She pushes 'play' again and David Ravell begins to speak.

EXT. SUE ANN'S HOUSE - STREET - LATER

Sue Ann comes out of her house, balancing a homemade cake in front of her. The candles give off an unearthly glow as she picks her way up the Sizemore's gravel drive.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DEN - SAME TIME

Betty is catatonic, staring at the frozen image of David Ravell on her TV. Downstairs, Sue Ann comes in.

SUE ANN (O.S.)

Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday to you! Happy Birthday, dear –

A terrified SCREAM as the cake lands unceremoniously on the entryway.

ON BETTY

As she hits 'Play':

DAVID

...you're wonderful, Chloe, you are...
But I just know there's something special out there for me.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - FOYER - LATER THAT NIGHT

Roy enters the foyer and looks around, carrying a pad and pen in hand. He hears VOICES from the kitchen, sees FLASHBULBS going off. He sneaks down the hall when A VOICE stops him.

DEPUTY

Hang on there, Roy. Nobody comes in.

ROY

Elden called me. He wants to, ahh,
make a statement for the paper...

The deputy nods him through and Roy moves off toward the sewing room where he has spotted Betty.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - SEWING ROOM - SAME TIME

Betty is packing an overnight bag on her bed when Roy enters and quietly closes the door behind him. She is working with a purpose, almost like a different person from the woman we first met. Still bright and cheerful, but with a willful glint in her eye. Determined.

ROY

Hey, Betty. Are you okay?

BETTY

I'm great, good, content.
(stopping)
What happened to your arm, Roy?

ROY

Oh, nothing, it's fine. I just need
to keep it wrapped for a few...

BETTY

Make sure it's elevated...

ROY

Uh-huh.

BETTY

You want me to make you a sling?
It's no problem...

Betty starts whipping a T-shirt into place but stops abruptly. She turns curiously to Roy.

BETTY

What're you doing here, Roy?

ROY

Well, I was worried about you and I wanted to make sure you were alright... and I guess I was sort of hoping I could ask you about what happened...

BETTY

Oh, that... Sure, I saw the whole thing. It was disgusting!

ROY

My God... did you get a look at who did it?

BETTY

Yes.

ROY

You did? Was it anyone that you...?

BETTY

It was Chloe...

Sheriff Ballard enters the house, surveys the scene of the crime where one deputy wipes blood off his boot with a paper towel, and erupts when he sees Roy.

BALLARD

Hey, you guys wanna try not stepping directly in the evidence, please?

(to Roy)

Ostrey, you and your goddamn police scanner! I leave for ten minutes and... Betty, I'm sorry about this.

He motions to a female officer.

BALLARD

Why don't you take her down to the station? We'll be along in a bit...

She leads Betty out the kitchen door.

BETTY

'Night, guys...

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

As Ballard leads Roy into the next room...

BALLARD

Okay, let's go... I got nothing for the record yet.

ROY

Oww! My arm, careful!

BALLARD

Ahh, what'd you do now... fall off your bike again?

ROY

No, it's nothing, I... my piranha just mauled me a little when I layed their food out.

BALLARD

Good God... they're meat eaters, Roy, just drop the shit in there!

ROY

I can't... they prefer a more formal presentation. I don't usually go so close to the surface, but I was...

BALLARD

...you are so goddamn weird.

(BEAT)

Oh, and by the way, get the hell outta here!

ROY

No, Elden, I need to...

BALLARD

You need to get yourself gone from my crime scene. And leave Betty alone, she's...

ROY

She knows who killed Del. Elden, she said it was a woman.

BALLARD
It wasn't a woman.

ROY
Yes it was. Betty saw the whole thing!
Your killer's name is Chloe...

BALLARD
I'm tellin' you it wasn't no woman,
Roy!

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Ballard drags Roy into the living room, where he sees Del. He has been turned upright and is being carefully examined.

ROY
Jesus...

BALLARD
You think a woman did that?!

Roy runs into the kitchen, covering his mouth.

INT. BETTY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Ballard and his cronies delight in watching Roy struggle with the dry heaves. Roy runs to the kitchen sink, almost loses it, then wipes his mouth with a paper towel.

BALLARD
Kinda' looks like a burnt out roman
candle, don't he?
(BEAT)
Del must've sold a lemon to the wrong
Indian, and got paid back the old
fashioned way. Them Kickapoos get
pretty mean when they drink...

Roy sees Del's scalp in the garbage can as he goes to drop his crumpled towel inside.

ROY

So, you think you're gonna find his scalp hanging in some tepee?

BALLARD

They no longer live in tepees, Mr. College Graduate.

ROY

Did you send anyone out there?

BALLARD

You bet I did. I got a squad car on the way to the reservation right now.

ROY

Bad idea...

BALLARD

You just go write your little story, Roy. I'll handle the police work...

ROY

You better handle what's in this garbage can first.

EXT. SIZEMORE MOTORS - NIGHT

Every car on the lot has its trunk open and spare tire on the ground behind it. Charlie and Wesley are at the last car.

WESLEY

I still don't understand how you knew Del was telling the truth.

CHARLIE

I saw his soul Wesley. He was face to face with his God, and no one lies in that situation. But your Geronimo act rattled me, and I abandoned my instincts.

(BEAT)

Never abandon you instincts.

WESLEY

I didn't. You gave me a look!

CHARLIE

What 'look'?

WESLEY

That one look you got! I thought you were done, so I took him out...

CHARLIE

I wasn't done, I was just sick of hearing him whine. And you didn't take him out, you scalped him. Christ, I almost puked, did I tell you that?

WESLEY

Well, why'd you have to tell that Indian story?

CHARLIE

What the hell does that mean? If I'd told a Ty Cobb story would you have clubbed him to death with a bat?

Wesley is stung. Charlie slams the last trunk in disgust. The rest remain where they are; open.

CHARLIE

It's not here. Let's go.

WESLEY

You just gonna leave these cars sitting here like this?

CHARLIE

Why not, it'll confuse 'em... gotta do something, now that you fucked it up.

WESLEY

I wanted to make a statement.

CHARLIE

Let me tell you something. In our business you can't put food on the table if your phone doesn't ring.

The guys who get the calls are good – not flashy, just good. They get in, they get out. Nobody knows a goddamn thing. Understand? Boom, boom, boom. Three in the head and you know they're dead.

WESLEY

...that's a good motto.

CHARLIE

Fine, I'll get you a bumpersticker, but you better start believing it! It's the only statement you need to make.

INT. POLICE STATION / OBSERVATION ROOM - NIGHT

Betty is questioned in a holding room by a POLICE OFFICER and a DOCTOR. Ballard and Roy watch through a window.

DOCTOR

And did your husband know these people?

BETTY

Sort of... but he ignored them.

DOCTOR

And how did that make you feel, Betty?

BETTY

I felt all cold inside. And angry.

Ballard looks both ways to make sure he won't be overheard.

BALLARD

I questioned Joyce about all this...

ROY

Yeah?

BALLARD

Seems she was pretty familiar with 'ol Del. On a regular basis, if you get my drift...

ROY

...and half the other guys in this town. Including you, I believe...

BALLARD

Junior year!

ROY

Anyway, so what?

BALLARD

So? ...Suppose Betty found out about them?

ROY

You said a woman couldn't have done it.

BALLARD

A woman can write a check.

ROY

So you're saying Betty Sizemore – our Betty Sizemore – who you were in swing choir with – has now hired somebody to scalp her husband in her own kitchen while she watched? You're amazing.

BALLARD

'S just a theory... just 'cause I'm thinking it don't mean I like it.

The doctor comes out of the holding room.

BALLARD

How is she?

DOCTOR

She's in a kind of shock. I see all the signs of a post-traumatic reaction with possible dissociative symptoms.

BALLARD

Could I have that in American?

DOCTOR

It's a type of altered state... it allows a traumatized person to continue functioning.

BALLARD

So she did witness it?

ROY

Oh, you're sharp as a tack, Elden.

BALLARD

That's it! YOU'RE GONE!

He spins Roy around and marches him toward the door, one arm bent behind his back.

ROY

Oww, the arm, the arm!

BALLARD

You just don't know when to quit, Roy! You were jealous of me when I got hall monitor in seventh grade, and you're still jealous now!!!

ROY

One question, Doctor, please!
(outside the door)
You can't do this! I'm the press, I have rights!!

BALLARD

That's right, you have the right to remain silent.

Ballard pushes Roy out the door. As he returns, Roy reappears behind him, leaning in to listen. Ballard doesn't see him.

BALLARD

Sorry you had to see that. You were saying?

DOCTOR

I was saying that it seems probable

that she witnessed the murder, but her memory of it is gone, at least for the time being. I also think you ought to have her stay with someone tonight.

(BEAT)

Any idea who Chloe or Lonnie are?

BALLARD

No... Friends from the diner maybe?

DOCTOR

Well, you should find out. She keeps talking about them...

Ballard nods, sure he's got a clue here. He looks in at Betty again, just as she begins repacking her travel bag. He frowns at this, his suspicions fueled all the more.

EXT. SUE ANN'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A police car pulls up to Sue Ann's house. Betty gets out, carrying her overnight bag. Sue Ann appears, embraces her and leads her inside.

INT. SUE ANN'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATER

Betty lies down in a bright red race car bed. Sue Ann tucks her in and turns out the light.

SUE ANN

Let me know if you need anything, okay?

BETTY

Are you and Larry happy?

SUE ANN

Oh, I dunno... enough, I s'pose.

BETTY

Then you should treasure that... you gotta hold on to whatever you got that's any good, even if it's only a little bit.

SUE ANN

All you been through... I ever tell
you what a good friend you are?

BETTY

All the time...

SUE ANN

Well, you are.

After a beat...

BETTY

Something bad happened to Del and
me, didn't it?

SUE ANN

Yeah, hon. Real bad. You just get
some sleep, everything's gonna be
fine.

BETTY

Sue Ann, I'm sorry about all this,
but I just know there's something
special out there for me...

Sue Ann looks down at her friend, troubled. She strokes Betty's hair gently and kisses her. After she leaves, Betty lies awake, staring at the ceiling. A mobile dangles overhead.

LATER

The Mickey Mouse clock on the wall reads 3:30. Beneath it, Betty is sitting up in bed, wide awake.

INT. SUE ANN'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Betty comes down the stairs without a sound. She finds a pen and paper near the phone and writes a note.

INSERT: Dear Del: This is the hardest thing I've ever done and I can't even face you. But I need to be honest. We haven't been happy for a long time. You always say people need their space, and now you'll have some. I'm sorry.

BETTY

She takes off her wedding band and puts it on the table.

EXT. BETTY'S HOUSE/GARAGE - NIGHT

Betty raises the garage door, tosses her overnight bag and birthday money envelope into the LeSabre, and gets in. She drives through Fair Oaks, past the town limits. She keeps on driving until her car recedes into the moonlit prairie horizon.

EXT./INT. LESABRE - DRIVING - NIGHT

She comes to a sudden halt in front of the "You are Leaving Kansas" billboard. She stares hard at it through the windshield. Suddenly, she hits the gas and bolts off along the Oklahoma blacktop. She never looks back.

INT. BETTY'S LESABRE - THE NEXT DAY

Betty yawns, looks at her watch and increases her speed. When she sees a sign for a MOTEL ahead, she pulls off the highway.

EXT. TRUCK STOP/MOTEL - DAY

She parks at a truck stop/restaurant/motel complex, hops out and runs to the motel office window.

INT. TRUCK STOP - MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Betty enters her room, immediately turns on the TV, and plops down on the bed.

VOICE (V.O.)

And now we return to "A Reason to Love."

EXT. TRUCK STOP/MOTEL PARKING LOT - SAME TIME

A crowded truck stop in the Texas flatlands. THREE TRUCK DRIVERS in jeans, flannel shirts and denim jackets walk across the parking lot.

One is an old, grizzled veteran with a salt-and-pepper stubble

and a greasy CAT cap on his head. It's CHARLIE. Next to him is DUANE, a burly young driver in fancy cowboy boots. Flanking Duane is WESLEY.

WESLEY

So you got Asian women?

DUANE

(Southern accent)

Sure, I got Asian. Got black, white, any color you like, video and magazine. Got fat chicks and animals too, if you want 'em. They're extra...

CHARLIE

Mmmm. Well, it was a piece of luck running into you, Duane. I thought I was gonna have to take Wesley out and hose him down. All he talks about is those Japanese gals.

WESLEY

I like 'em small. When you're inside a little Asian chick, it's like your dick is the axle that holds her body together.

DUANE

That's nicely put. You outta get yourself to Thailand...

They reach Duane's truck, an empty car-carrier with Michigan plates, and climb up into the cab.

INT. DUANE'S TRUCK - DAY

Two Confederate flags criss-cross over Duane's CB unit. On the dashboard is a Rebel flag pin, a bumper sticker that says "The South Will Rise Again" and a dozen country music tapes.

Duane gets in the sleeper cab, where stacks of porno tapes and magazines reach the ceiling. Wesley takes the driver's seat, Charlie, the passenger seat.

CHARLIE

What part of Dixie are you from,
Duane?

DUANE
Georgia. In case I didn't tell you,
it's cash only, gentlemen.

WESLEY
We can live with that.

CHARLIE
I'm a Yankee, myself. Massachusetts.

Duane passes two videos to Wesley.

DUANE
Here's Ghengis Kunt and The
Demilitarized Zone. Get it?
(laughs)
They're Korean, so they're pretty
hot.

CHARLIE
You know, it's interesting. The South
lost the Civil War, but they still
seem to get all the glory.

DUANE
Huh?

CHARLIE
Jeb Stuart, Stonewall Jackson,
Jefferson Davis – they're all losers
in my book.

Charlie smiles. Duane stops digging through the videotapes.

DUANE
The fuck you talking about?

CHARLIE
Even Robert E. Lee was a loser.

DUANE
(to Wesley)
He goin' crazy on us, or what?

CHARLIE

Did you know the most brutal, inhumane prison of the entire war was in Georgia?

DUANE

Really. And where was that, old man?

CHARLIE

Andersonville.

(BEAT)

They did horrible things to men there...

INT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - (ON TV SCREEN)

Chloe is curled up on her white leather sofa, cowering as Lonnie hovers over her accusingly.

LONNIE

I think you better tell me what's going on here, Chloe.

CHLOE

I just feel... funny about what we did.

LONNIE

(laughs)

You feel guilty? Let me remind you of something, sweetheart. You're in this up to those fabulous eyes of yours. Understand?

The camera holds on her face for a melodramatic beat... Chloe's trapped, and she knows it.

PULL BACK to reveal Betty lying on the bed in her motel room, out cold.

INT. DUANE'S TRUCK - LATER

The flag poles over the CB unit are bare. Duane is in the sleeper cab, his forearms bound to his thighs with duct tape. A telltale piece of Confederate red fabric hangs out of his

mouth. There is a purplish bruise on his forehead. He's quiet, but glowering at his captors.

CHARLIE

...So, at a rest stop outside Logansport you noticed that two guys were slipping something extra in one of your cars, and you decided to see what it was. Then you figured you'd take this valuable commodity and go into business yourself, even though it didn't belong to you. But you needed a crackerjack salesman to move it, so you made the biggest mistake of your short life and chose Del. Sound right so far?

Duane nods.

CHARLIE

Del's dead, by the way. I sent him to the Great Beyond.

WESLEY

Actually, I scalped him, and then you killed him.

Duane narrows his eyes in disbelief.

CHARLIE

Exactly.

(BEAT)

Now, the one thing I don't get is that we checked all the Buicks on that lot. Four '97 LeSabres and nothing in 'em.

Duane smiles mockingly.

CHARLIE

Ohhh... There weren't four, were there?

Charlie reaches up above the visor and pulls down a rumped manifest. He leafs through it.

CHARLIE

There were five, damn it! I should have known!! Goddamn...

(BEAT)

So, what happened to the fifth car?

Duane shrugs his shoulders.

CHARLIE

You know you're going to die, don't you, Duane?

(Duane nods)

And you really don't know where that other LeSabre is, do you?

Duane shakes his head. Charlie sighs, resigned.

CHARLIE

He's telling the truth. He doesn't know.

WESLEY

Should I kill him now?

CHARLIE

Wait. Any last words, General Lee?

Duane nods emphatically. Wesley pulls the Confederate flags out of his mouth.

DUANE

Suck my dick, you Yankee piece of shit.

He spits in Wesley's face. Charlie has to restrain Wesley.

CHARLIE

God, I admire that. Ya see that, Wesley? That's why they get all the glory.

Charlie climbs down from the big rig and heads across the parking lot. The Town Car is parked near the adjacent motel, just a few spaces away from Betty's LeSabre.

With a furious calm Wesley wipes his face, then takes out a

can of lighter fluid, sets it on the dash and looks at Duane.

WESLEY

...why'd you spit on me?

EXT. TRUCK STOP/MOTEL PARKING LOT - DUSK

Charlie pulls the Town Car alongside Duane's rig and drums the steering wheel impatiently. It begins to rain. There are flashes of LIGHTNING in the distance.

CHARLIE

Come on, Wesley, three shots.

A FLASH OF ORANGE FLAME ignites inside Duane's cab. Charlie sighs. Finally, THREE DULL THUDS reverberate from inside. Wesley climbs down clutching a videotape and gets in the car.

CHARLIE

What the hell was that, another statement?

WESLEY

Well, no one ever spit in my face before. Especially some cracker fuck.

CHARLIE

You have to rise above it. The professionals rise above that kind of thing...

As they drive away FLAMES are beginning to dance inside the cab.

INT. TRUCK STOP/MOTEL ROOM - EVENING

The FLICKERING LIGHT of the TV screen is the only light. Betty lies asleep on the bed. The NEWS comes on and she starts to stir as ...

NEWSCASTER

...small town of Fair Oaks... has left people shaken... owner-manager of Sizemore Motors...

Betty sits up. On the TV screen is a shot of Del as Julius Caesar from one of his commercials.

NEWSCASTER
...police are still investigating.

She blinks at the screen, confused, as the next story comes on. Betty reaches for the phone.

INT. POLICE STATION - EVENING

Ballard is doing paperwork. Roy is asleep on a nearby bench. A DEPUTY picks up a ringing phone and hands it to Ballard.

DEPUTY
Sheriff, it's Betty Sizemore, on two!

BALLARD
SHHH!...
(Whispering)
BETTY? WHERE ARE YOU?

INT. TRUCK STOP/MOTEL ROOM - ON BETTY

BETTY
I'm in a motel. Has something happened to Del? Did he do something stupid?

BALLARD (V.O.)
BETTY, I NEED TO TALK TO YOU... IN PERSON! WHERE'RE YOU AT?

BETTY
IF THIS IS ABOUT DEL, FORGET IT! I'M NOT COMING BACK!

BALLARD (V.O.)
GODAMMIT, BETTY!... WHO'S CHLOE?

BETTY
I'M THROUGH TALKING NOW! GOODBYE!

She hangs up. HEADLIGHTS sweep across the curtains, startling her.

INT. BETTY'S LESABRE - MOVING - DAY

Betty crosses the border from Texas into New Mexico. She grips the wheel intently, driving for all she's worth.

EXT. FAIR OAKS TRAILER PARK - LATE AFTERNOON

Betty's blue Corsica sits surrounded by yellow police tape. Half a dozen COPS mill around. To one side are several REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS, Roy included. A FEW RESIDENTS mill around in the background.

A stack of pictures of Betty sit on a makeshift table.

REPORTER #1

Who witnessed Ms. Sizemore driving here?

BALLARD

The Assistant Manager, Mr. Wylie.

REPORTER #2

But he couldn't identify the male passenger?

BALLARD

Only to say he was wearing green.

ROY

What if the killers didn't see her?
You published her picture – you're gonna get her killed!

BALLARD

No, we're bringing the community into the effort to find her.

ROY

You're lying!

BALLARD

I spoke to Betty Sizemore yesterday.
(the reporters hush)
That's right. There's no doubt in my mind, folks... she's on the run.
Whether or not she's mixed up in all

this remains to be seen...

ROY

That's bullshit, Sheriff! You think she's a suspect!

BALLARD

I'd like to apologize for our local boy. He's been in love with Betty since the fifth grade, y'see. He means well, but he's in over his head on this.

INT. TIP TOP DINER - NEXT MORNING

CLOSE SHOT of a headline in the Wichita Eagle: "EYE WITNESS TO BRUTAL MURDER MISSING" over a picture of Betty. Charlie is one of MANY CUSTOMERS reading a copy. Wesley is plowing through a stack of pancakes.

WESLEY

So how do we know that car's still in Fair Oaks?

CHARLIE

We don't. But a '97 Le Sabre'll be easy to find if it's here, town this size...

(BEAT)

He said he gave his wife some car as a gift, remember?

Charlie turns the page for emphasis and studies Betty's features.

CHARLIE

This is bad, Wesley. Very, very bad.

Wesley happily adds three strips of bacon brought by A WAITRESS, who wears a button with the word "Missing" over Betty's face.

CHARLIE

...extremely bad.

Wesley finally looks up, directly at the picture of Betty.

CHARLIE

Did you hear what I said?

Wesley nods, his mouth stuffed with food.

CHARLIE

Maybe you don't appreciate the gravity of this situation. It's bad enough that we don't have what we came here for. It's worse that we don't know where it is. And now this.

(points at the headline)

This was supposed to be my last job. I already put the deposit down on my boat.

(BEAT)

How can you eat at a time like this? I get nauseous just watching you...

WESLEY

I can eat because I know we didn't kidnap that woman. I can eat because they aren't looking for us. And I can eat 'cause I'm fucking hungry...

(off Charlie's look)

...relax. She's gonna end up on a milk carton and that's about it.

CHARLIE

I hope you're right...

WESLEY

...I know I am. Let's just do what we gotta do here, and get the fuck gone.

They sit for a moment in silence. Wesley swallowing without chewing and Charlie studying Betty's photo.

CHARLIE

She got out of town awfully fast. And wasn't she quiet in that house? I think most women would have screamed, don't you? I know they would've...

(BEAT)

We could be dealing with a cunning,
ruthless woman...

INT/EXT. SUE ANN'S HOUSE - DAY

Sue Ann opens her front door to find Wesley standing before her. It's a new Wesley: glasses, conservative suit, and a convincingly humble manner.

WESLEY

Mrs. Rogers? I'm Dwight Campbell,
with Neighborly Life Insurance. I'm
looking for Betty Sizemore.

SUE ANN

I wish I could help you, but I can't.

Wesley is hit by a flying action figure. He doesn't flinch.
Kids run by.

WESLEY

Aren't they precious?

(BEAT)

Ma'am, she has a substantial death
benefit coming to her from the tragic
loss of her husband. Does she have
any relatives in the area?

SUE ANN

No.

(BEAT)

Well, her grandparents are down in
Oklahoma, but that's it...

WESLEY

I see. And are you in touch with
Mrs. Sizemore?

SUE ANN

No. But I'm taping her show every
day so she can watch it when she
comes back.

WESLEY

Her show?

SUE ANN
"A Reason to Love."

Wesley's eyes light up. He can't help himself.

WESLEY
I see.
(BEAT)
Did Chloe testify?

SUE ANN
(reassuring)
I don't think she will. She's a slut,
but I just don't think she's that
mean. Jasmine'll bring her around...

WESLEY
Jasmine... Do you have yesterday's
show on tape, by any chance?

Sue Ann holds the door open, smiling, and Wesley enters.

INT. TIP TOP DINER - KANSAS - DAY

Charlie nurses a cup of coffee at the counter while talking to Darlene. His Federal Marshall's badge rests on the counter. Shehands him two photos of Betty taken at her birthday celebration. In one she's holding the cardboard David Ravell. The other, a closeup shot.

CHARLIE
...and how long did she work here?

DARLENE
Oh, five years, give or take.

CHARLIE
Hmm... you two in high school
together?

DARLENE
Aren't you a sweetheart... no, not
quite. Anyway, she's been with us
awhile.

CHARLIE

But she wanted more out of life,
right?

DARLENE

No... she just wanted something outta
life. Anything. And with Del, she
wasn't getting nothing. That's her
husband, Del. I'm sorry about what
happened and all, but that's the way
I feel about all of this...

CHARLIE

I see.

(holding up photos)

May I?

DARLENE

If it helps bring her back, be my
guest...

CHARLIE

Thank you for your cooperation.

(BEAT)

Just one more thing... did she ever
talk about getting rich?

DARLENE

...who doesn't?

Darlene tries to smile and returns to the kitchen. Charlie
studies the snapshots, comparing them.

INT. APARTMENT/BEDROOM - DAY

Wesley is in bed on top of Joyce, humping her slowly.

WESLEY

...and what kind of car does she
drive?

JOYCE

Well, she wanted a LeSabre, but Del
made her use that blue Corsica...

(BEAT)

So, is this what you boys'd call

'pumping me for information?'

Joyce GIGGLES as Wesley stops moving.

WESLEY

Did you say LeSabre?

JOYCE

Look, she didn't kill Del over no car if that's what you're thinking.

WESLEY

But she could have taken one, right?

With her knees, Joyce prods him into humping her again.

JOYCE

Maybe, but I don't think she had the nerve. I know her. And I'm a pretty good judge of character...

Joyce reaches for a cigarette on the nightstand and takes a deep drag. Wesley closes his eyes and turns away, offended.

WESLEY

...yeah, I can see that.

EXT. DESERT ROAD - WILLIAMS, ARIZONA - DAY

Betty drives along a lonely stretch of highway that slowly reveals a desert town in the distance.

INT. CANYON RANCH BAR - DAY

Big ol' place. Lots of wood and red leather. Betty rushes in as the clock on the wall reads 2:58. The Town Drunk, MERLE, is alone at the bar watching "Bass Masters" on a huge TV screen. In front of him is a remote control. A FEW OTHERS at tables.

Betty sidles up to the bar and sits down. She looks at Merle, at the clock, at the remote.

BETTY

Would you mind very much if I changed the channel at three o'clock?

MERLE

Yes.

He BURPS, then finally looks at her with bleary eyes.

BETTY

Please? It's very important to me.
"A Reason to Love" comes on at three
around here.

He ignores her. Betty puts her wallet on the bar.

BETTY

I'll give you money.

Merle SLAMS his hand down on the bar, scaring her.

MERLE

ARE YOU DEAF?!!

It's 3:01. ELLEN DRABER, 40's, appears behind the bar, looks at the clock and takes the remote from Merle. She changes the channel to "A Reason to Love" as the opening titles end.

Betty can't believe it. Merle smiles at her wickedly.

MERLE

Please keep it down, it's time for
"A Reason to Love..."

BETTY

That's real funny. Why don't you
have another drink?

ELLEN

What's the matter here?

BETTY

I begged him to let me put that on!

ELLEN

He's a prick. Merle?... You're a
prick.

MERLE grunts in reply. Ellen turns back to Betty.

ELLEN

So you're into "Reason," too?
Finally, someone civilized! I'm Ellen,
what can I get you?

BETTY

Hi, I'm Betty. I'll take a Miller,
if you got it...

INT. CHLOE'S APARTMENT - DAY (ON TV SCREEN)

Chloe paces in front of her white sofa, a matching white
telephone in her hand. She looks worried.

ELLEN (O.S.)

What's that bitch up to now?

We hear the BEEP TONE of an answering machine.

CHLOE

Lonnie? It's Chloe. We need to talk...
I don't think I can go through with
this.

She hangs up. The camera stays on her for a melodramatic
beat of introspection as we GO TO COMMERCIAL.

INT. CANYON RANCH BAR - RETURN TO BAR

BETTY

Do you have a phone?

Ellen swings a phone up onto the bar.

ELLEN

If it's long distance you can leave
me a buck when you're done.

Betty dials...

BETTY

Sue Ann? It's Betty. I just wanted
to let you know I'm okay... Huh? I'm
at the Canyon Ranch Bar in...
(looks at Ellen)

MERLE

Phoenix...

ELLEN

Shut up, Merle... Williams.

BETTY

Williams, Arizona. About halfway there, I guess.

INT. SUE ANN'S HOUSE - DAY

Sue Ann is in her kitchen, ignoring the pleas of all three children.

SUE ANN

Halfway where? You've gotta come home. We've been worried sick about you. Are you alright?

BETTY (V.O.)

Sue Ann, I thought you of all people would back me up on this, you know what Del's like. How did he take my note?

SUE ANN

Betty, honey, listen to me. A man came by from Mutual Life Insurance. He says you've got money comin' to you from Del's policy.

(BEAT)

Del's life insurance policy – Are you with me?

BETTY (V.O.)

What are you talking about?

INT. CANYON RANCH BAR - DAY

"A REASON TO LOVE" comes back on the TV.

BETTY

Tell Del I'm sorry. I left so quick, but I need to do this.

SUE ANN (V.O.)
Do what?

BETTY
I gotta go.

SUE ANN (V.O.)
Betty! Listen to me! Del is ...

Betty hangs up.

INT. COCKTAIL LOUNGE - NIGHT (ON TV SCREEN)

David is at a bar staring into his drink. Lonnie is with him.

LONNIE
How you holding up, amigo?

DAVID
I just wish I knew why she's doing it.

LONNIE
Yeah. Women are an unsolved mystery.

ELLEN (O.S.)
If that little weasel ever walked in here I wouldn't serve him.

BETTY (O.S.)
I'd slap his face.

ELLEN (O.S.)
I'd kick him in the nuts, if I thought he had any.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CANYON RANCH BAR - LATER

There are two empty beer bottles in front of Betty. The THEME MUSIC and CLOSING CREDITS of "A Reason to Love" are playing. Betty pushes the phone back across the bar.

ELLEN

Where you headed, Betty?

BETTY

Los Angeles, California.

ELLEN

And you called your friend, and she's telling you not to go?

(Betty nods)

When I went to Europe my friends told me I was crazy.

BETTY

Europe? The Europe?

(laughs)

This is my first time out of Kansas.

ELLEN

I should call you Dorothy.

(BEAT)

When I left here I went straight to Italy. Everybody told me not to go. But I wanted to go to Rome ever since I saw Audrey Hepburn in "Roman Holiday," and goddamnit, I went.

BETTY

Did you love it?

ELLEN

Sure I loved it! It was great.

Ellen rinses a few glasses as she talks to Betty.

ELLEN

Let me tell you something. I got groped by these Tunisian guys who thought I was a slut for wearing shorts, it was hotter than stink the whole time, and I got some kind of weird gum disease from the water. Plus, it ended my marriage –

BETTY

That's horrible!

ELLEN

No, he was a toad. Even more of a toad than Merle... I just wear the ring to keep the flies away. Rome was the best thing I ever did, because I DID IT! And I swear to you, it changed me. I've been to Rome, Italy! I sat every morning at the Cafe Sistina and had my cappuccino, and watched the pilgrims walk to mass, and no one can ever take that away from me.

Betty leans across the bar conspiratorially. She looks at Merle to make sure he won't hear her.

BETTY

I left my husband two days ago.

ELLEN

Really?

BETTY

I'm getting back with my ex-fianc. He proposed to me right around here, so I guess this is just sort of a sentimental stop...

ELLEN

Wait, I thought you said you'd never been outta Kansas...

BETTY

Oh. I mean, except for that.

(BEAT)

Yep. I'm trading in a car dealer for a heart specialist, so that's pretty good...

ELLEN

Nice move. Cedars Sinai?

BETTY

No. Loma Vista.

ELLEN
(laughs)
I s'pose his name's David Ravell.

BETTY
(truly shocked)
How did you know?

ELLEN
What's his real name?

BETTY
Dr. David Ravell.

ELLEN
You mean... George McCord, the actor?

BETTY
No, I mean David Ravell. He's a
surgeon.

Ellen looks at Betty.

ELLEN
Yeah, I know, we just watched him
together, remember? Up there on the
TV.
(off Betty's earnest
look)
Good God Almighty... You're serious.
I've heard about people like you.

Ellen whistles, wipes the bar down to buy a few seconds.
Merle looks over at Betty, then catches Ellen's eye.

ELLEN
Piss off, Merle.
(to Betty)
So how you gonna find him, Betty?

BETTY
I'll go to the Hospital.

ELLEN
What if you can't find him? What if
you get out there, and nothing's the

way you thought it was gonna be?

BETTY
Like Rome?

ELLEN
Worse.

BETTY
You made out alright.

ELLEN
Yeah, but at least I knew Rome was
gonna be there when I arrived...

Ellen walks to the end of the bar and starts rinsing glasses.
After a beat, Betty gets up and moves down close to her.

BETTY
Ellen, this is the biggest thing
I've ever done, but I've gotta do
it.

ELLEN
You take care of yourself then, Betty,
and don't let anybody stop you...

BETTY
To tell you the truth, I can't believe
I've made it this far. It may not be
Europe, but I just know there's
something special out there for me...

Ellen looks into Betty's eyes – sees the innocence, the
hope and enthusiasm – and has to look away. Betty takes it
as her cue to leave. She smiles, puts two dollars on the bar
near the phone and leaves. Ellen stands perfectly still,
watching the door.

MERLE
What planet is she from?

INT. BETTY'S LESABRE - GRAND CANYON - MOVING - DAY

Betty approaches the GRAND CANYON, driving slowly along the
South Rim, searching for a specific spot. Finally, she pulls

over abruptly. This is it. We can tell by the joy in her expression.

EXT. GRAND CANYON - DAY

Betty walks to the rail and gazes out at the canyon. Turning her head slowly, as if expecting it, she sees DAVID RAVELL leaning on the rail about twenty feet away, clutching a bouquet of roses.

Betty starts toward him... he starts toward her... A magic moment... Shattered when a black sedan appears, inching its way along. She freezes. David vanishes, and... An ELDERLY MAN helps his wife out of the car and snaps her picture in front of the canyon. Betty moves away.

INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - KANSAS - MOVING - NIGHT

Charlie and Wesley drive across Kansas farm country.

CHARLIE

So she gets rid of the asshole and is set for life in the same day.

WESLEY

You think so? Joyce says she's timid.

CHARLIE

Joyce was screwing Del.

WESLEY

...among others.

CHARLIE

I'd say that about torches her credibility, wouldn't you?

WESLEY

Yeah, well, if the wife's trying to sell it she'll fuck up. She's an amateur, just like Del was.

The CAR PHONE RINGS. Charlie answers.

CHARLIE

Maybe...

(into phone)
Yes?

SUE ANN (V.O.)
Is this Neighborly Life Insurance?

CHARLIE
Sorry, you've got the wrong number.

He hangs up.

CHARLIE
No, I see Betty as a Midwestern Stoic type. Ice water in her veins. A clear thinker. Probably a Swede or a Finn.

WESLEY
A 'Finn?' What is a Finn?

CHARLIE
You should read more. Listen to me. I think this woman was waiting for a chance to do this, and we gave it to her. She kept to herself for years, living with a pompous asshole. Then she sees her opportunity, and BOOM! – she leaves that little mudpatch in the dust. These heartlanders can't figure it out, 'cause that's not their sweet little Betty. Hah! We've been tracking her for, what, three days and I already understand her better'n most the people in that shitty little burg.

Charlie pulls out the close-up photo and studies it.

CHARLIE
Betty, Betty, Betty...

WESLEY
So what the fuck's a Finn?

CHARLIE
Oh, for Chrissakes. It just means the kind of person who can eat shit

for a long time without complaining,
then cut their momma's throat and go
dancing the same night.

WESLEY

Like... us?

CHARLIE

No,... like a worthy adversary,
Wesley. Like a very worthy adversary.

INT. ROY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Roy approaches his fish tank cautiously. He leans down and looks at the piranha as a TV commercial ends and "A Reason to Love" comes on.

He then returns to his computer, struggling to find the right words and to type them with only one hand. He types a little, stares at the screen, then deletes an entire sentence one character at a time, hammering on the 'Delete' key. He glances up at the television as the words 'Chloe' and 'Lonnie' are repeated.

INT. POLICE STATION - BALLARD'S OFFICE - THE NEXT DAY

Roy and Sue Ann go straight to Ballard's office, where they find him at his desk eating lunch out of tupperware containers. He wears a napkin tucked into his shirt-top.

BALLARD

What the hell do you want?... Hey,
Sue Ann, what's up?

ROY

We think we know where Betty is.

BALLARD

Ah, shit... Do I have to hear this
now?

SUE ANN

What's with the tupperware, Elden,
did Meredith run outta baggies?

BALLARD

No reason to get a plate dirty.

ROY

I see you're sticking to the diet
Betty put you on...

BALLARD

Worry about your own goddamn lunch!

ROY

(excited; to Sue Ann)
Tell him what you told me.

SUE ANN

Betty is a big, big fan of the soap
opera, "A Reason to Love." Look...

She tosses a copy of "Soap Opera Digest" on the desk. Ballard ignores it and keeps eating.

BALLARD

Why do I need to see this? Did he
ask you to...?

ROY

Listen! I saw 'Chloe' and 'Lonnie'
on T.V. They're television characters.

SUE ANN

Betty's in love with Dr. David Ravell,
from the show. What if she's out in
Los Angeles looking for him? The
actor, I mean...

BALLARD

That's the dumbest thing I've ever
heard.

ROY

Yeah? Well, she called Sue Ann
yesterday from Arizona.

BALLARD

She said she was in Arizona, did
she?

ROY & SUE ANN

Yes!!

BALLARD

You people are even more stupid than I thought. The woman's on the run and she's gonna just phone in her location?

SUE ANN

Come on, Elden, she's not on the run. Couldn't you at least call the Los Angeles Police Department?

ROY

You gotta do that much.

BALLARD

Hey, I'm the law. I don't gotta do nothing...

EXT. FARMHOUSE - OKLAHOMA - DAY

The Lincoln pulls into the dusty, overgrown driveway and front yard of a derelict farm.

INT. FARMHOUSE / KITCHEN - DAY

The remains of pie and coffee on the table, Charlie and Wesley kick back with JERROLD BLAINE and his wife ELIZABETH, both in their 80's. Photos of Betty at various ages lie scattered in front of them.

Charlie holds up a picture of a young Betty in ballerina costume posing at the barre. He studies it intently.

ELIZABETH

This is Betty at twelve.

CHARLIE

Very graceful. Perfect form.

ELIZABETH

Betty was a lovely child.

JERROLD

And she always had such spirit! But,
after her mother died...

WESLEY

Would you say she was ambitious?

JERROLD

Oh, there's no tellin' what that
girl could've accomplished, and she
never had it easy. Never really had
a childhood... caring for her father,
going to school.

Charlie admires a photo of Betty, around 18 years old. He
continues to rummage through a box of collectibles, pocketing
a small child's diary when it is convenient.

CHARLIE

Wise beyond her years, I'm sure, and
such poise, too.

(quietly)

Very, very impressive...

WESLEY

Well, then, did you ever get any
indication that she wanted to leave
her husband?

ELIZABETH

I don't like talking bad about the
dead, but now that he's gone I can
tell you she put up with things in
that marriage I wouldn't have. And
yes, she, of all people, was the one
who defended him. And that's why
what that sheriff said makes me so
angry.

CHARLIE

What do you mean?

ELIZABETH

If anyone had paid to have that
husband of hers killed, it would
have been me.

CHARLIE

(taking her hand)

Mrs. Blaine? I can tell you right now, without a doubt, that your granddaughter is alive, and did not kill Del Sizemore.

JERROLD

You've got to be missing a piece of your soul to kill someone. That's not our Betty...

WESLEY

(defensive)

...why do you think you have to be missing a piece of your soul to kill somebody?

JERROLD

Because it ain't natural, young man.

WESLEY

What are you talking about? Killing's totally natural. It's dying that isn't natural...

CHARLIE

(covering)

My partner's still young, Mr. Blaine, and he loves his job.

(laughs)

He'd like to kill all the criminals himself!

(BEAT)

Now, if Betty was running from someone, where do you think she'd go?

INT. BETTY'S LESABRE/ EXT. COUNTY USC HOSPITAL - MOVING - AFTERNOON

Betty drives through Boyle Heights – East L.A., holding a map and checking street signs. She is wearing a brand new Nurse's uniform. Up ahead, she sees the hillside complex of L.A. County/USC Hospital. Hurriedly, she pulls over and checks herself in the visor mirror. She is underwhelmed.

BETTY

God... I still look like a waitress.

INT. HOSPITAL - CHIEF NURSE'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

The CHIEF NURSE, a large, dynamic woman in her 50's, faces Betty across her desk.

CHIEF NURSE

Of course, I don't know every doctor who works here...

BETTY

Dr. Ravell's the finest surgeon on the staff. You must know him. He's incredibly handsome, gentle, considerate. He's being sued for sexual assault right now, but –

(Off Chief Nurse's look)

It's not true. He was set up.

CHIEF NURSE

Well, I certainly would have heard about that.

BETTY

Of course, he's only here two days a week. He's also on staff over at Loma Vista.

CHIEF NURSE

...I don't think I know that hospital.

BETTY

It's in a very pretty area that gets a lot of sun, has palm trees out front, mountains in the background...

CHIEF NURSE

Really? You've just described all of Southern California.

The Chief Nurse looks at Betty for a moment, then stands abruptly, signaling the end of the interview.

CHIEF NURSE

Well, I'm sorry, but I can't even consider you without references or a resume. And frankly, I don't know how you could have forgotten them.

INT. HOSPITAL / HALLWAY - LATER

On her way down the hall Betty passes a patient's room when the sound of A PERSON MOANING stops her. She can't help but go inside. A TV plays commercials.

AN OLDER WOMAN lies in bed, alone and staring at the ceiling. Betty looks around and notices several arrangements of flowers on a deserted nightstand. She brings them over to the older woman's bedside, positions them, then gently strokes her head.

BETTY

There... you rest now.

The woman's eyes flutter. She is disoriented at first, then calms as she adjusts to the comforting sight of Betty. Betty takes her hand.

OLDER WOMAN

Who... who're you?

BETTY

I'm... I'm Nurse Betty.

The woman smiles serenely at this and begins to drift off. Betty checks her monitors as the opening credits of "A Reason to Love" begin to play.

She glances up at the doorway at the same moment and sees Dr. David Ravell standing at the entrance. He checks the chart on the door, smiles warmly at Betty and then moves off. In a flash, Betty is up and after him.

The THEME MUSIC is her private soundtrack as she checks out every man in surgical scrubs, looking for David Ravell. Then... She sees him. In all his glory at the end of a corridor walking away from her. Betty gives chase. She gains steadily on him, her heart racing. As they near Emergency

the NOISE LEVEL picks up. He stops at the nurses' station.
Betty closes the gap. She starts to run.

BETTY
DAVID!!!

He turns to face her... It's not David Ravell.

BETTY
Sorry, I thought you were someone
else.
(BEAT)
Do you know Dr. David Ravell?

The man shakes his head. Betty keeps going, looking around:
it's incredible – the size, the activity, the intensity.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY AREA - SAME TIME

DOZENS OF PATIENTS lie on gurneys awaiting treatment in a
holding area. It's still more intense at the entrance: VOICES
talking back and forth urgently, POLICE OFFICERS, CIVILIANS,
DOCTORS AND NURSES converging.

EXT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY AREA - LATE AFTERNOON

FIVE AMBULANCES unload patients at the same time. At that
moment a group of TWENTY JAPANESE HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATORS
reaches the E.R. portion of their tour.

A WHITE MERCEDES tears up the ramp and SCREECHES to a stop.
A YOUNG MAN in gang colors is pushed out, bleeding heavily.
A DOCTOR runs at the Mercedes to head it off, yelling
indignantly. The car plows right into him and takes off.
Another ambulance crests the ramp, lights flashing. The
Mercedes SLAMS into it head-on. NURSES AND DOCTORS run into
the parking lot. A GANGBANGER gets out of the Mercedes, dazed
and wobbly. He pulls a pistol. Everyone dives for cover.

The Mercedes driver is unconscious. The driver of the smashed
up ambulance is slumped over the wheel. The rear doors fly
open, and a young Hispanic woman, ROSA HERRERA, leaps out.

ROSA
SOMEBODY HELP US! PLEASE, SOMEBODY!

Doctors and nurses work on patients and try to get to the injured doctor, but the kid with the gun keeps them away. SECURITY GUARDS draw their guns and scream at him to drop it.

ROSA
WHY ISN'T ANYBODY HELPING US?!!
(to gunman in Spanish)
Hey, you little shit! If I had a gun
I'd shoot you right now!

The loading area is jammed with panicked people. Doctors and nurses creep out of the hospital on all fours, trying to stay low. No one is getting to Rosa, whose frantic eyes find Betty. They look right at each other.

ROSA
What are you standing there for?!

Betty walks toward her calmly, indifferent to the danger as Rosa pulls the gurney out of the ambulance herself. A PARAMEDIC lies unconscious inside.

ROSA
You gotta help him, he's hurt bad!!

On the gurney is a YOUNG MAN with a chest wound, nearly dead from blood loss. A DOCTOR appears and quickly examines him while keeping one eye on the gunman. He looks up at Betty.

DOCTOR #1
Forget it! He doesn't have a chance.
Help us over here.

The doctor takes off. Rosa looks at Betty, crying.

ROSA
Please!

Betty hesitates, then checks his pulse – he has none. She peels back the bandages over a huge chest wound.

ROSA
Danny, it's gonna be all right!

Betty looks at Rosa again; looks around for help – there's

no one. She plunges her fingers into the wound.

ROSA
(panic)
What are you doing?

BETTY
He has no heartbeat!

ROSA
You're hurting him!!

BETTY
I'm massaging his heart. I saw it
done once.

ROSA
ARE YOU CRAZY?!! STOP IT!!!

BETTY
LISTEN TO ME! IF I DON'T DO THIS,
HE'S DEAD!

She keeps working on him. We hear a GUNSHOT, and the kid with the pistol falls to the pavement. The loading area immediately fills with DOCTORS, NURSES and COPS.

BETTY
All right, we're moving him inside!
Give me a hand!

Rosa is shocked into motion. Together they wheel Danny toward the entrance. A DOCTOR and TWO NURSES come out to take over. Betty, her white uniform now covered in blood, steps aside.

INT. HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - LATER

The DOCTOR tries to calm Rosa and keep her from entering the treatment area.

ROSA
Is he gonna live?

DOCTOR
He's got a chance. Thanks to what
that nurse did.

They exit together as AN ADMINISTRATOR and several Japanese officials approach. The Chief Nurse hovers nearby.

ADMINISTRATOR
(to Chief Nurse)
Harriet? Who is that remarkable nurse?

CHIEF NURSE
That's Betty Sagamore. I hired her
today.

INT. CHEAP HOTEL - NIGHT

SEVERAL LOW LIFES are hanging out in the lobby. When Betty comes in with a bag of groceries they look up, ready to hassle her as she approaches the DESK CLERK.

BETTY
May I have my key, please?

She puts the bag on the counter, revealing that the front of her white uniform is covered with blood. She smiles at the low lifes, stopping them in their tracks.

INT/EXT. MOTEL ROOM - HOUSTON, TEXAS - DAY

The Town Car's looking a little muddy around the rims. Charlie and Wesley look tired as they wait in a seedy motel room. Charlie sits near a window, reading diary entries aloud. Wesley kicks back on the bed, fast-forwarding through "Genghis Kunt" and talking back to the screen.

WESLEY
Thas' it, thas' it... conquer that
bitch.
(BEAT)
What time're they coming?

CHARLIE
It's not an exact science, Wesley.
He said they'll be here... My Houston
contact has always been very reliable.

WESLEY
And then we're gonna do her right

here. Right?

CHARLIE

You're always so coarse... "Do her right here." Let's just see what happens, okay?

(reading)

"I wish that I could find a way; To speak my thoughts on Mother's Day. There are no words that quite express; My gratitude or happiness. A pleasant smile perhaps a kiss; I would not fail to give her this. I'd make her glad the whole day through; By sayin' 'Mother', I love you!' P.S. I wish I could say this to my mother's face, but I can't anymore."

Wesley rolls his eyes and turns up the volume. Finally a car pulls up outside and Charlie snaps the book closed. He makes a quick attempt to arrange himself and motions to Wesley, who turns off the tape.

A WOMAN with greasy blonde hair and skinny legs shown off by a short skirt comes in with another MAN. Charlie looks her over disgustedly as his face falls.

CHARLIE

Who are you?!

(to the man)

What the... Who the hell is this?

MAN #1

Easy, Charlie! She's exactly who you said you were looking for.

CHARLIE

Wait, wait a minute. We have a major miscommunication here. This not Betty. This is not even close to Betty...

WOMAN

What the fuck're you talking about?
My name's Betty...

CHARLIE

Then I'm sorry... Wrong Betty.

WESLEY

Let's get out of here. We got another long drive ahead of us.

(BEAT)

...the fuck where I do not know, but I know it's gonna be long.

CHARLIE

(gathering his things)

Betty would never dress like that. She's not some trailer park slut!

WOMAN

Fuck you!

CHARLIE

And she doesn't have a sewer for a mouth...

WESLEY

Okay, thank you, goodbye... Keep in touch...

CHARLIE

...She's got class, and poise. Lots of poise...

The man looks at Charlie, then at Wesley, who shrugs in reply as he steers them out the door.

WESLEY

Will you ease off on the 'poise' shit, you're spooking me here...

INT. HOSPITAL - CHIEF NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

The Chief Nurse sits behind her desk. Betty faces her like a student in the principal's office, now dressed in her white waitress uniform. She hopes no one notices.

CHIEF NURSE

What you did yesterday was reckless at best. You are not an employee of this hospital! If that boy dies I

don't even want to think of the lawsuit that'll follow. Are we communicating here?

BETTY

Yes, ma'am.

CHIEF NURSE

Good. I'm prepared to offer you a job. You can help out in the pharmacy until your California certification and references arrive, but you are not to touch anyone. Is that totally clear?

(Betty nods)

Fine...

The Chief Nurse gets up, and Betty follows suit.

CHIEF NURSE

You can start tomorrow. And don't say a word about this to anyone.

(studying Betty's uniform)

Is that issue?

BETTY

Umm... yes. Back home.

CHIEF NURSE

Alright. Oh, and one more thing about what you did yesterday... Well done.

INT. HOSPITAL - INTENSIVE CARE UNIT - DAY

Danny Herrera is in bed unconscious. Rosa and her MOTHER are keeping vigil when Betty enters. Rosa jumps to her feet.

ROSA

Hey, it's Supernurse! Betty, right?

Rosa hugs her and tells her mother in Spanish who Betty is.

ROSA

My mother doesn't speak English.

Sra. Herrera smiles at Betty and starts to cry. As she steps forward, Rosa stands aside. The short, stocky woman envelops Betty in a bearhug.

MOTHER

No podremos olvidar lo que hizo ayer.

ROSA

(translating)

We can't forget what you did yesterday... How can my family ever repay you?

BETTY

Tell her I was just –

MOTHER

Yo s que es su empleo, pero...

ROSA

She doesn't care if it was just your job... Danny would be dead now but for you.

Sra. Herrera kisses Betty's hands and smiles through her tears. Then she motions to Rosa to take her place as she goes to Danny's bedside. Betty picks up Danny's chart and reads it.

ROSA

You don't sound like you're from here.

BETTY

I'm not. I just drove in from Kansas.

ROSA

So why'd you come to L.A.?

BETTY

I came for love. My fianc, is here.

MOTHER

Bravo! Mi hija no hace nada para amor...

ROSA

You're making me look bad... My mother says I wouldn't move across the street for love.

BETTY

It's something I had to do. For David.

ROSA

'David.' That's your guy. So, you staying with him?

THE ICU NURSE enters and adjusts the bank of machines feeding, medicating and monitoring Danny. Betty watches with interest.

BETTY

No... I don't really know where he is yet. I'm at a hotel around the corner.

ROSA

Man, that is love.

MOTHER

Ella debe quedar contigo.

ROSA

What? Ahh, Mom says you should stay with me... Okay, yeah, why not?

Betty looks at Sra. Herrera curiously.

ROSA

You can go get your stuff right now. I'll walk you down.

BETTY

No, that's not, I couldn't...

ROSA

Listen, when someone does the kind of thing you did, you gotta do something in return. So, you stay with me until you find your David and live happily ever after. Okay?

Rosa follows Betty out the door.

EXT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Betty and Rosa make their way up the stairs of a Silverlake apartment house.

At the sound of SCREECHING TIRES they both look down as a black Lincoln Town Car drives by. Betty shudders.

ROSA

You okay? This neighborhood, you get used to it...

She nods. Rosa continues to talk as they climb the many stairs that lead to her door.

ROSA

I got this apartment with a guy.

BETTY

The one you were telling me about?

ROSA

No, this one was worse... I had to have the place sprayed when he left. Twice... He was two guys before the last one – not counting a little office thing in there, which I'm trusting you with, 'cause if it gets out, I'm on the street...

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - SAME TIME

The place is neat. As well furnished as a legal assistant's salary will allow. The living room is dominated by a large glass tank filled with tropical fish. Betty checks out the space.

BETTY

It's lovely... I really like your aquarium.

ROSA

Yeah, well, at least fish don't use your razor or pee on the seat...

BETTY

Hmmm. Sounds like you've had a pretty tough go of it with men...

ROSA

Oh, I dunno... but just once I wish I'd run into a guy who noticed the Koi before my tits.

Betty smiles, a little embarrassed.

ROSA

...come on, I'll show you your room.

EXT. TEXAS HIGHWAY - THE NEXT DAY

The black Lincoln Town Car is parked on a lonely stretch of prairie highway. Wesley sits in the passenger seat with the door open. The RADIO is on. Charlie is on his cell phone nearby.

CHARLIE

(into phone)

No, we don't know where she is... I understand... No, we'll find her...

(BEAT)

I understand.

He hangs up and looks out at the horizon, where huge black storm clouds are gathering. Then he walks slowly to the hood of the car, staring at the ground in front of his feet.

WESLEY

What'd they say? Can we go back to Detroit?

Charlie rests his hands gently on the hood, as if considering buying the car. Wesley's MUSIC BANGS from the radio.

CHARLIE

They said find it. Find her, find it. Finish the job you were paid to do.

WESLEY

Half.

CHARLIE

What?

WESLEY

They paid us half. They still owe us half...

CHARLIE

(disappointed)

There it is again. That lousy attitude that got us here in the first place. That "make a statement," do an end zone dance, shake your ass and sue everybody in sight attitude that's dragging this whole country down the drain.

(BEAT)

They don't owe us shit, Wesley! WHEN YOU FINISH THE JOB, YOU GET PAID!! WE HAVEN'T FINISHED THE GODDAMN JOB!!

Charlie POUNDS on the hood of the car, scaring Wesley.

CHARLIE

That woman could be in any one of four states. Four big states where the deer and the antelope play, Wesley! We're not in Rhode Island!

WESLEY

I know that.

CHARLIE

AND TURN THAT FUCKING MUSIC OFF!

Wesley switches it off. Charlie turns his back to the car and addresses the angry clouds on the horizon.

CHARLIE

Do I deserve this? In the twilight of my career, do I deserve this? I don't think so! I've always tried to do what's right. I never took out anybody who didn't have it coming.

I'm a professional!
(BEAT)
AND WHERE THE FUCK AM I? I'M IN
PURGATORY!

WESLEY
Worse... you're in Texas.

CHARLIE
Well, I should be in FLORIDA now! If
Carl hadn't gone in to get those
stones removed, you wouldn't be here
and I'd be on my way to the Keys. On
my boat, RELAXING WITH A GLASS OF
PORT!! Re-ti red!

The first raindrops begin to fall.

CHARLIE
I'm very tired, Wesley! I've worked
hard, and the work should be over,
but IT'S NOT! This job is just
beginning.
(he turns around)
GET IN THE CAR!

Wesley is in the car, but he's too scared to tell Charlie,
whose eyes are blazing. Charlie silently walks around to the
driver's side and gets in. He and Wesley stare at each other
over a photo of Betty, which is between them on the dash.
Charlie starts the engine and snatches up the picture.

CHARLIE
What're you thinking, girl? What's
going on in that pretty little mind
of yours? Huh? You can tell me...

He paws at the picture, imploringly. He mutters to himself.
Wesley shakes his head and stares out.

INT. HOSPITAL - PHARMACY - DAY

Betty sits in an office along with a CLERK who taps away at
a computer keyboard while she studies a printed list of names.

BETTY

I can't find Loma Vista Hospital...

CLERK

I never heard of Loma Vista Hospital.

BETTY

I don't believe this! You're the second person here who's told me that. That's like Ford saying they never heard of GM!

CLERK

Try another county...

He exits.

INT. LAW FIRM - LATER

Rosa is on the phone at her desk in a law office.

BETTY (V.O.)

Hey, Rosa... it's Betty. How do you get to this town called 'Tustin?' It's in Orange County...

ROSA

Tustin? Take the Hollywood Freeway to the Five...

BETTY (V.O.)

The Five?

ROSA

Just look for the really crowded road and follow that.

BETTY (V.O.)

Okay... oh, umm, would you mind if I borrowed some clothes?

ROSA

Huh? Sure, look in my closet, take any dress you want!

(BEAT)

We're still on for tonight, right?

INT. EXAMINING ROOM - LATER

Betty stands in a sexy pink dress, trying to decide if she should put on a hospital gown and waits, tensing each time she hears a voice from the hallway. Finally, the DOORKNOB BEGINS TO TURN.

A man's hand and the bottom of a white sleeve appear. The door swings open and a silver-haired, bespectacled DOCTOR in his mid-60's enters. The nametag on his white coat reads "DAVID RAVELL, M.D."

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Tasteful jazz, plenty of red leather booths. Betty winds her way through a PACKED CROWD, passing out small white cards. Rosa spots her and goes over to meet her.

ROSA

You made it! Hey, that looks great on you. 'S classy...

(BEAT)

So, how'd it go today? You find him?

BETTY

Ummm... no, no. Different 'Ravell.'

Rosa starts to lead her to the bar.

BETTY

You know, the more I think about it, this really isn't David's kind of place.

ROSA

What are you talking about? This bar is packed with professional people!

(BEAT)

Everybody says if you're going to get married, this is the spot to meet someone... Luckily, I'm currently off men, so I've got the luxury of not giving a shit.

BETTY

I know what you mean, I recently had

some trouble with a man, a different man... and David's still getting over Leslie.

(off Rosa's look)
His wife.

ROSA
He has a wife?!

BETTY
Had. She died in a car accident last year. She was decapitated.

ROSA
God, that's awful!

BETTY
It may not have been an accident. They never did find her head...

ROSA
Her 'head'?! You're making this up...

BETTY
No, no! Well, see, she was having an affair with a Russian diplomat who I believe was mixed up with the Mafia...

ROSA
Jesus, I thought my love life was crazy...

LATER

Rosa and Betty are sitting in a booth, talking over drinks. The place is a little quieter now.

ROSA
...so, we'll hit the library first and fan out from there. They've got all the L.A. phone books, plus medical directories...

(BEAT)
We're not gonna let him hide from you any more, okay? I'm making this my personal mission.

BETTY

David isn't hiding from me, I left him standing at the altar six years ago and now I'm...

ROSA

Fuck the details, they're always to blame... Look, too many of these guys duck out on us, especially after they become doctors or lawyers. I see it at my company all day long! So I'm just gonna make sure you get your, you know, fairy tale ending or whatever...

(BEAT)

One of us should.

BETTY

Rosa, I can't believe you're doing all this for me... thank you.

Rosa glances over to see Betty pass a business card to A WAITER who checks on them. When he is safely gone, Rosa touches Betty on the sleeve.

ROSA

Hey, how 'bout a card for me? What is that?

(takes one, reads)

"Please call if you have any information on David Ravell." This is my phone number! How many of these have you given out?

BETTY

How many men have I talked to?

ROSA

Jesus! They're all gonna be calling me!

BETTY

You said in L.A., anything goes.

ROSA

I was talking about what you could wear!

EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - THE NEXT DAY

The Town Car's parked on a barren stretch of desert highway, white smoke billowing from the hood. Half a mile ahead Charlie and Wesley are walking in the sweltering heat.

They're in their shirtsleeves, drenched in sweat as the sun beats down on them.

CHARLIE

See, in a LeSabre Betty's probably getting twenty-two, maybe twenty-five miles to the gallon, where we're topping out at fifteen.

(BEAT)

She's probably all cool and fresh, and comfortable in that nice air-conditioned car right now.

Wesley wipes the sweat from his eyes and trudges on in silence. Charlie takes out a photo of Betty and speaks to it.

CHARLIE

You don't look comfortable here. That's 'cause you don't like being the center of attention, do you? Nah. You're like me.

WESLEY

What the hell's the matter with you?

Wesley grabs the photo, tears it in half and tosses it. Then he starts walking. Charlie is stunned for a moment, but recovers quickly. He finds the pieces and stuffs them in his pocket, then catches up to Wesley.

CHARLIE

That was a really shitty thing to do.

WESLEY

I'm sick of looking at her mother-

fucking face.

A beat... they walk for a moment.

CHARLIE

Don't talk like that. She's my last one, Wesley, my final target.

(to photo)

Don't you realize your special, that you represent something?

This is too much. Wesley explodes.

WESLEY

What? What does she represent?! What could some cornbread white bitch from Kansas who's dragging our sorry asses up and down the Louisiana Purchase possibly mean to you?! I'd just love to know...

CHARLIE

I dunno... something.

(BEAT)

Why is she doing this to me? Why?...

WESLEY

I don't know, but when we find her she's gonna die for it.

INT. ROADSIDE GARAGE - LATE AFTERNOON

The Lincoln Town Car is raised up high on the hydraulic jack. Wesley is at a pay phone out front.

WESLEY

Can you describe her to me?... Okay...

Yeah, that sounds like her... Thanks.

He hangs up and goes into the garage, where he addresses the Town Car above him.

WESLEY

They found her in Vegas.

No answer.

WESLEY
Perfect match on the description.

ON CHARLIE

Lying across the front seat taping the reassembled photo of Betty to the dash. Charlie's beginning to come apart. His hair is uncombed and his clothes are wrinkled. His eyes have a thousand-yard stare.

WESLEY (O.S.)
Sounds like she's with the buyer Del lined up.

Charlie pulls himself up on the door and looks down.

CHARLIE
How'd they describe her?

WESLEY
You know, blonde, thin, whatever...

CHARLIE
Not so fast! Slower... 'blonde, thin', yes... Did they say she had style? A kind of grace or anything?

Wesley rolls his eyes, then goes straight to the levers controlling the hydraulic jack.

WESLEY
(to mechanic)
How do I get this fucking thing down?

MECHANIC
I wouldn't if I were you. He got pretty upset when I tried it...

INT. LAW OFFICE - A DIFFERENT DAY

MERCEDES LOPEZ, early 40's, impeccably dressed, enters her office loaded down with a bulging briefcase and a stack of files under her arms.

(The entire scene is in Spanish.)

MERCEDES

What do you think my father would do if I told him I didn't want to be a lawyer anymore?

ROSA

Probably the same thing my mom would do if I got engaged... have a heart attack.

MERCEDES

So how's it going with your new roomie? What's her name?

ROSA

Betty. It's O.K. except I'm worn out. We spent all weekend looking for her doctor-boy. How can a big time heart guy leave no trace of himself?

MERCEDES

So tell her to settle for the old one in Orange County.

ROSA

She's gonna have to 'cause I'm out of ideas.

MERCEDES

Maybe we're suing him for malpractice. What's his name again?

ROSA

David Ravell.

MERCEDES

God, that sounds so familiar. Ravell, Ravell... where's he out of?

ROSA

I'm not sure now. She said he used to be over at Loma Vista. I never heard of it.

MERCEDES
Loma Vista?
(laughs)
You mean like the guy on "A Reason
to Love?"

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Rosa enters, tosses her purse on the table and goes straight to the VCR. Written in magic marker on a video is "A Reason to Love, Apr. 23." The tape Sue Ann gave to Betty. She pops it in and turns it on. The OPENING TITLES start... The characters appear... one is an impossibly handsome man over the title "DOCTOR DAVID RAVELL."

INT. HOSPITAL PHARMACY - LATER STILL

Betty working at a desk in the pharmacy. The same clerk as before busies himself at another counter. Rosa appears at the glass partition and raps urgently on it.

ROSA
Guess who I saw today.

BETTY
Who?

ROSA
Doctor David Ravell.

BETTY
What? Where was he?!

ROSA
ON TELEVISION!!
(off Betty's puzzled
look)
Cut the shit, will you!

A BEAT. Rosa SLAMS the videotape down on the counter.

ROSA
Either you're making a fool out of
me because you get off on it, or you
got serious problems. Which one is
it?!

BETTY

I have no idea what you're talking about.

ROSA

I'M TALKING ABOUT DAVID RAVELL!!

BETTY

Shhh! I heard you the first time.

ROSA

(suddenly calm)

I spent my weekend looking for someone who does – not – exist. I should have been here at the hospital with my brother, but I was with you.

BETTY

If you didn't want to do it, you should have said so! Is this about gas money?

ROSA

IT'S NOT ABOUT GAS MONEY!!

(BEAT)

You have a thing for an actor on a stupid white soap opera, and we searched all over town for his character! Not the actor – whose name is George, by the way. His character!

Rosa stands over Betty, fuming.

BETTY

Are you having a nervous breakdown?

Rosa SCREAMS and smacks her hand on the glass as Betty watches. SEVERAL PEOPLE in a nearby lounge look up. Rosa stares at them until they look away.

BETTY

Why'd you help me in the first place?

ROSA

I helped you because I'm an idiot!
Ask my mother, I love it when people
take advantage of me! I TRUSTED YOU!!
I THOUGHT HE WAS REAL!

BETTY
HE IS REAL!!

Betty tries to return to her work but Rosa confronts her loudly. The nearby VISITORS and STAFF pretend to be busy.

ROSA
You need help, Betty! Even if this
is your idea of a joke, you need
SERIOUS HELP!!
(walking away – to
herself)
Necesitas un mdico! Pront simo!

ON BETTY

fuming in her humiliation. After a moment, Rosa reappears at the window.

ROSA
I'm not going back on our arrangement.
My word is good, and my family owes
you. But I think it's best for both
of us if you get your own place as
soon as you can.

BETTY
Fine.

EXT. SIZEMORE MOTORS - KANSAS - NIGHT

Roy and Joyce approach the door to the trailer/office. She takes out her key, then stops. It's been padlocked and barred with yellow police tape, as is the whole lot. Roy pulls hard on the lock, then starts looking around.

JOYCE
You're wastin' your time, Roy.

ROY
Look Joyce, I need your key to the

files, not advice, okay? This is a complex case.

Roy works on opening a side window.

JOYCE

Nothin' complex about it. Del's dead, Betty's gone. She's probably dead, too.

ROY

You'd like that wouldn't you? You've hated Betty since you were in Pep Squad together...

JOYCE

No... before that.

ROY

Ahh, I hate this town! Places like this just make you small...

(BEAT)

I should have never come back here after college.

JOYCE

Blah – blah – blah... Hurry up, will ya, I got a date tonight...

Roy forces the glass open and starts to squirm through the window as Joyce watches.

JOYCE

I don't know what you think you'll find, anyway.

ROY (O.S.)

Names, a phone number, something...

(BEAT)

Listen, Ballard told me that the guy who brought the missing car down from Detroit was murdered, but do you see him doing anything about it? If Ballard wasn't such a stubborn ass, I wouldn't have to be breaking in here...

The color drains from Joyce's face.

JOYCE
What did you say?

ROY (O.S.)
The driver was killed. I think there's
a connection –

JOYCE
(starting to cry)
No, about... Are you talking about
Duane Cooley?

ROY (O.S.)
Yeah. Why, you know him?

JOYCE
(crying)
Know him? We were gonna get married!
He was gonna leave his wife for me!
Fuck!!...

Joyce begins to sob at the side of the trailer as Roy shimmies through the window frame.

Suddenly, Ballard is there, weapon cocked and placed roughly into Roy's privates. Joyce backs away.

BALLARD
I know you don't use them, but if
you wanna keep 'em you'll back out
of there slowly...

INT. SQUADCAR - MOVING - NIGHT

Roy is in the rear of the car, handcuffed to the screen dividing the front seat from the back. Ballard is driving.

ROY
Come on, Elden, think about it. The
driver, all them trunks standing
open like that... something's going
on here!

BALLARD

I know that...

ROY

Well, do something, then, damnit!

BALLARD

You watch your mouth when you're in a goddamn county vehicle... You don't think I see what's going on? Del, now this Cooley fella, both of 'em mixed up with Joyce... 'S not no conspiracy, not some episode off the X-Files... 's just a crime of passion, plain and simple. Betty's on some kind'a pre-minstral rampage, that's what is going on here.

A moment of silence as they drive.

ROY

Oww... Did you have to make these things so tight?

BALLARD

No, I didn't have to.

He grins at Roy in the rearview mirror.

INT. LAW FIRM - ANOTHER DAY

Mercedes Lopez arrives at the office and stops at Rosa's desk.

(The entire scene is in Spanish)

MERCEDES

Hey... Is Betty still trying to find that soap opera guy?

ROSA

Oh, yeah... Man, I'd love to find that actor just to see the look on her face, watch her bubble burst in mid-air.

Mercedes hands her two tickets to a benefit.

MERCEDES

Here's your needle... He's supposed to make an appearance here tonight.

INT. BETTY'S BEDROOM - LATER

Betty's lying on her bed reading "Modern Nurse". The L.A. Times Classifieds are open on the bed. Rosa looks in.

BETTY

Don't worry, I'm looking... just taking a tiny break.

ROSA

This is crazy. I come home, you go to your room. You go in the kitchen, I go to my room. It's stupid.

Betty nods in agreement.

ROSA

So what do you say? Can we be friends?

BETTY

...okay.

Rosa smiles and starts looking at the tickets in her hand.

BETTY

What are those for?

ROSA

Oh, it's a charity dinner. The money goes to a good cause, but I don't have anybody to go with...

BETTY

Umm...

Rosa exits for a moment, then reappears in the doorway.

ROSA

...you hungry at all?

INT. LINCOLN TOWN CAR - MOVING - LATE AFTERNOON

The car is covered in dust and mud from the road. It's worse inside: food wrappers, empty bottles, pieces of clothing, filthy windows. They've been living in it.

Wesley's driving now. Charlie's almost unrecognizable: a six day beard, uncombed greasy hair, bloodshot eyes, rumpled clothes and an exhausted, faraway look. The photo of Betty faces him, taped to the glove box. He is reading from the diary, which he clutches like the Bible. They roar along a desert highway, passing a sign that says "Grand Canyon, This Exit. 74 Miles." Charlie looks up, marking his place.

CHARLIE

We should go.

WESLEY

We don't have time to look at a hole in the ground. We can make Vegas in four hours. This one's got to be her.

CHARLIE

It's a very moving experience, trust me.

WESLEY

No.

CHARLIE

One of the Seven Natural Wonders of the World.

WESLEY

No... be dark before we get there. You wanna see the Grand Canyon at night?

CHARLIE

What difference does it make? She wasn't in Kansas City, or Houston, or Dallas. We went to every goddamn place Del mentioned and no Betty. So what the hell makes you think she's in Vegas? You think she's waiting

for us with tassles on her titties?
Vegas is too crass for Betty.

WESLEY
I said, 'No.' N-O.

Charlie turns to a passage and reads aloud.

CHARLIE
"When I grow up I'm going to become
a nurse or a veterinarian. I always
want to help people and value all
life, be it animal, plant or
mineral..."

(to Wesley)
Does that sound like a goddamn
showgirl to you?

WESLEY
Do you hear yourself right now...?
Like a fucking madman...

Wesley drives on stoically. The Exit comes and goes.

CHARLIE
Every American should see the Grand
Canyon. Are you an American?

WESLEY
Yes, I am and we're not going. Act
professional.

Charlie stares at him, hate rising from just below the
surface. He draws a nickel-plated pistol and points it at
Wesley's head. Wesley looks at it and keeps on driving.

Charlie knows this isn't the way to handle it. He lowers the
pistol.

CHARLIE
If you don't take the next turn for
the canyon, I'm blowing my goddamn
brains all over this car.

He puts the pistol in his mouth and cocks it. Wesley looks
over, not so sure this time.

LONG SHOT of the black Town Car as the turn signal comes on, and it eases onto a lonely dirt road. Their headlights pick out a sign that says: "Grand Canyon Fire Trail. Forestry Personnel Only."

EXT. BEVERLY HILTON - EVENING

Rosa and Betty approach the hotel entrance. Ahead of them a black Lincoln Town Car pulls up. Headlights glint on the chrome, hitting Betty in the eye. She freezes, and Rosa bumps into her.

ROSA

Sorry.

Betty stares at the car, unable to remember what it should mean. Then a MAN in a tuxedo gets out. Betty moves on.

INT. BEVERLY HILTON - LOBBY - EVENING

A sign on an easel reads "Save the Children." Betty and Rosa present their tickets at the door to a ballroom.

Several times there is a stir near the entrance and a scattering of flashbulbs. Rosa scans the crowd.

BETTY

Looking for someone?

ROSA

You never know who you'll see.

Rosa keeps looking. Finally, GEORGE McCORD – the actor who plays DAVID RAVELL – enters.

He comes in with LYLA BRANCH, late 40's, and TWO OTHER MEN. Several women approach George, some starry-eyed, for quick, polite greetings. He's doing his job of being a soap star.

Rosa waits for an opening, then puts her hands on Betty's shoulders and points her at George.

ROSA

Look who's here!

Betty's jaw drops. She freezes.

ROSA

What are you waiting for? Talk to him! You came fifteen hundred miles for this.

Rosa prods her, then Betty makes her way unsteadily toward George. When she's a few feet away he looks up.

He can't help but notice her – she's beautiful. She's also looking right into his eyes. The conversation stops as he does a double take in Betty's direction.

GEORGE

Do I know you from...?

His friends watch as George studies her face.

BETTY

...of course you do.

(hurt)

You don't remember me?

GEORGE

I take it I should. I'm sorry.

BETTY

We were engaged.

LYLA

Oh good, another one...

George's friends look at each other. A few heads turn.

GEORGE

I beg your pardon?

BETTY

But I'm the one who's sorry. Letting you go was the biggest mistake of my life.

(to his friends)

We were thirteen days away from getting married and... I just got scared. It's a mistake I've had to

live with for six years. But it's
behind me now...

(to George)

And I hope you can put it behind
you. I've missed you... David.

George sighs with relief. His friends smile. The tension
evaporates. They can handle a fanatical fan.

GEORGE

That's very kind of you.

BETTY

The day I left you I just drove and
drove. I drove all day and all that
night, and I didn't go anywhere. I
just kept driving. I stopped at a
little country church, and the pastor
let me in, and I sat –

LYLA

...in the very first pew, where we
would have sat on our wedding day.

Betty looks at her. So does George.

LYLA

I can't believe I remembered that,
although I suppose I should. I wrote
it...

(to Betty)

But that was seven years ago, and
you're quoting it verbatim. I'm
flattered... I think. Or frightened.
What's your name?

BETTY

Betty Sizemore. What do you mean you
wrote it?

LYLA

I'm Lyla Branch. I'm the Producer.

They shake hands. ACROSS THE ROOM Rosa watches expectantly.

LYLA

Alright, I admit it, you had me there.
You're better than most of them,
anyway... do you have a headshot?

GEORGE

No, wait... what happened next, Betty?

LYLA

Are you sure you want to encourage
this?

(BEAT)

No, you're right, let's have some
fun. So, what did happen next,
"Betty"?

BETTY

Well, David moved out here and started
his residency. Then he met Leslie –

LYLA

No, no, no. We know all that. What
happened with you?

BETTY

I married a car salesman.

The friends laugh. Rosa watches, confused. So is Betty.

FRIEND #1

You were dumped for a car salesman,
George!

BETTY

Why are you calling him George?

FRIEND #2

Yeah – David – tell us about this
car salesman.

George likes the challenge. This party isn't so boring after
all.

GEORGE

Oh, you mean Fred.

BETTY

No, Del.

GEORGE

Right, Del. Del was one hot salesman. Of cars. He could talk anyone into anything.

BETTY

You knew Del?!

GEORGE

Honey, I didn't want to tell you at the time, but Del and I go way back. We went to school together. In fact, he saved my life. Two more minutes in that icy water and I would have drowned. But Del jumped in and grabbed me. We fell out of touch eventually, but I still owe him one.

BETTY

He never told me anything about... that's unbelievable!

LYLA

Funny, that's just what I was thinking...

GEORGE

I can't tell you how much it hurts me to hear that you married him.

His friends snicker. Rosa stares. Betty is oblivious to everything but George.

BETTY

I'm so sorry. Life makes us do awful things sometimes.

She's ready to cry. Which only inspires him all the more.

GEORGE

I tried to tell myself it was for the best, that there was a reason behind it. But... Del?

BETTY

There was no plan! I was just young
and stupid and scared!

GEORGE

You never gave us a chance...

BETTY

I know that. I can't tell you how
many times I've said that to myself
in those exact words.

Betty wipes her tears away as they flow freely now. George
doesn't like seeing her cry; he tries to say something but
his friends interrupt.

GEORGE

Hey, don't... come on, I was just...
you're not really crying, are you?...
I was just playing along...

FRIEND #1

Now, look what you've done, George.

BETTY

Why do they keep calling you George?

GEORGE

I don't know. Why do you keep calling
me George?

LYLA

Listen – David – It's getting late.

George hesitates; Lyla sees it.

GEORGE

(to Betty)

Right, uhh... I feel terrible about
this, we have a prior engagement at
another party.

(BEAT)

But... I'd be honored if you'd come.

LYLA

Yeah, bring your friend along. I'm

sure you got a lot of catching up to do...

Rosa watches, stunned, as Betty waves to her as she leaves arm-in-arm with the man of her dreams.

EXT. GRAND CANYON - NIGHT

The Town Car is parked near one of the viewing stops at the rim. Charlie stands in the darkness, but Wesley stays in the car.

CHARLIE

You don't know what you're missing, asshole.

Charlie walks toward the canyon rim. Suddenly, Betty appears in the headlights standing at the rail – her back to Charlie – with a bouquet of flowers.

ON WESLEY

Just as he closes his eyes to rest, the CAR PHONE RINGS.

WESLEY

Yeah?

SUE ANN (V.O.)

Mr. Campbell?

WESLEY

Huh?

SUE ANN (V.O.)

Is this Neighborly Life Insurance?

WESLEY

(recovering)

Oh, umm, yes, this is Dwight Campbell.

SUE ANN (V.O.)

It's Sue Ann Rogers, Betty Sizemore's friend? I heard from her.

ON CHARLIE

walking toward the rail. As he nears her, they kiss.

Suddenly, REPEATED BLASTS from the car horn.

The image of Betty shudders, then blurs, then fades away entirely. Charlie rubs at his eyes tiredly, then slowly trudges back toward the car.

Charlie returns and gets into the car. Silence. Wesley stares at him.

WESLEY

...you have a good time? You make a little wish?

Silence from Charlie.

WESLEY

Well, guess what? I found Betty... where she's been, anyway.

CHARLIE

Where? Where is she?

WESLEY

I'm not telling.

CHARLIE

What?

WESLEY

I'm not telling 'til you straighten up. You been acting like fucking Jerry Lewis on me and this shit's gotta stop or you can forget about your Betty... I mean it.

A slow transformation comes over Charlie.

CHARLIE

Wesley, I'm fine... just tell me where she is.

EXT. BEVERLY HILTON - NIGHT

George, Betty, Lyla and the two friends are waiting outside

the hotel for their cars.

FRIEND #2

I bought a car from Del, too. He sold me a lemon.

LYLA

Really? I put a hundred and thirty thousand miles on mine.

BETTY

Huh. I had no idea our little lot was so popular...

FRIEND #1

I never bought a car from Del. But I loved him. In my own way.

GEORGE

I guess we all did.

(to Betty)

You know, I didn't marry Leslie because I loved her. I married her to forget you...

BETTY

Oh, David... I'm sorry I caused you that much pain.

A black jeep 4x4 pulls up and ERIC AUGUSTINO, the actor who plays LONNIE, gets out.

BETTY

Oh my God! What's Lonnie doing here?

GEORGE

You're late, Eric.

ERIC

I know. Why are you guys leaving?

LYLA

We did our twenty minutes.

Before Eric can take another step Betty SLAPS him across the face. FLASHBULBS go off as PHOTOGRAPHERS capture the moment.

BETTY

You bastard! How can you even show your face around here? Do you think we're not onto you?

ERIC

Who the hell is this?

GEORGE

Sorry. She thinks you're someone else.

George hustles Betty to his car as photographers continue to shoot.

BETTY

I know exactly who you are!

EXT. CANYON RANCH BAR - NIGHT

The Lincoln Town Car rumbles into the dusty parking lot and parks.

CHARLIE

This doesn't look like the kind of place Betty would go to.

WESLEY

Maybe she had to use the bathroom. She pees, doesn't she?!...

Wesley tears the photo of Betty from the glove box.

CHARLIE

Be careful with that!

Charlie takes it back and gingerly secures the tape.

INT. CANYON RANCH BAR - NIGHT

Merle is at the bar, drunk, the only customer on a slow night. Ellen drops two coasters in front of Charlie and Wesley as they sit down.

ELLEN

What can I get you?

WESLEY

We're Federal Marshals, ma'am.

Ellen looks dubiously at their unshaven faces and rumpled clothes.

CHARLIE

We're looking for this young lady.

He slides the photo of Betty across the bar. Ellen's gaze drops to the picture for a second, and Charlie sees what he was looking for – a flicker of recognition. He allows himself a satisfied grin.

Wesley shows Ellen his badge as Merle checks out the photo.

ELLEN

I haven't seen her.

MERLE

Sure you have! That's...

ELLEN

Shut up, Merle.

Charlie continues to grin at Ellen...

WESLEY

Ma'am, if you've seen this woman –

MERLE

Betty! That's her name – Betty.

Charlie takes the photo and puts it back in his pocket.

ELLEN

I never saw that woman before, and neither has Merle. He drinks too much. And don't try to tell me you're cops. I was married to a cop for nine years, and you're not cops. Now get out of here.

Wesley steps behind Merle, takes a handful of his hair and

SLAMS his head into the popcorn machine on the bar. Merle staggers away, stunned. Wesley removes the tin popcorn scoop from a nearby hook.

Ellen reaches for something under the bar, but Charlie's faster. He pins her arm with one hand.

CHARLIE

You haven't been very forthcoming with us.

They watch Wesley follow Merle at a slow walk around the pool table, CLOBBERING him over the head about every five steps with the popcorn scoop.

Merle wobbles with every shot, but won't go down. They begin a torturous second lap around the table, punctuated by the CLANG of the scoop against Merle's head.

CHARLIE

What's your name, dear?

ELLEN

Ellen.

CHARLIE

That's a nice name.

After one more CLANGING shot Merle staggers, then falls. Wesley walks over to Charlie and Ellen, drawing his knife.

WESLEY

That's a really nice name...

INT. GEORGE'S RANGE ROVER - MOVING - LATER - NIGHT

George and Betty are alone.

BETTY

Lyla's very nice.

GEORGE

Yes, she is.

BETTY

She told me I was charming and

relentless, and would go far in this town. And she said that unlike the other charming, relentless people she knew, she liked me.

GEORGE

She's a good person to know.

(BEAT)

So where did you study again?

BETTY

Carleton School of Nursing. Two semesters, but Del made me give it up...

GEORGE

Alright, okay... I think you broke the record for staying in character about three hours ago.

BETTY

You told me that two hours ago.

He pulls up in front of Rosa's apartment and parks.

BETTY

I haven't been this happy since I was twelve years old.

GEORGE

What happened when you were twelve?

BETTY

For Mother's Day, I used all my allowance that I'd been saving to take my mother to Kansas City. We got our nails done and had lunch at "Skies," a restaurant at the top of a building from where you can see the whole city. It was the last outing we took together. She died the following year.

GEORGE

Wow... You just gave me goosebumps, you know that? You make it all sound

so real. Great improv...

BETTY

I just want everything to be perfect between us.

GEORGE

I know. Listen, we need to take a time out here. Can we talk seriously for a minute?

BETTY

Of course.

GEORGE

At last! I know how much you want this. You're gifted and extremely determined, but... it's not up to me.

BETTY

I know. It's up to us.

Betty leans over and kisses George – so deeply that he's too surprised to react. She pulls away abruptly and gets out.

BETTY

I love you, David. And I want to see you tomorrow, and the next day, and the next day.

Still surprised, and now a little intrigued, he watches her go inside.

INT. ROSA'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Betty comes in and pours a drink from the fridge. Rosa appears in a nightshirt behind her, framed in the doorway.

ROSA

Were you with him this whole time?

BETTY

Oh, God! You scared me! Yes...

ROSA
You still in love?

Betty nods.

ROSA
Does he know you think he's real?

BETTY
He is real.

ROSA
Uh-huh... So, what'd you talk about?

BETTY
Oh, my gosh, everything! My trip out here, what we've both been doing, you know...

ROSA
No, I'm not sure I could begin to imagine... So, where'd you go?

BETTY
To a party in the Hollywood Hills.

ROSA
Was it a huge place? With a view of the whole world?

BETTY
Yes. I'd never been in a place like that before.

ROSA
I have, lots of times. My mother used to clean them. I used to piss in their pools.

Rosa gets up and starts for her bedroom. She stops.

ROSA
This isn't fair, you know. Do you always get what you want?

BETTY

No, almost never.

ROSA

But, you're in love with someone who doesn't exist. You come here, you meet this guy, who should laugh in your face, and instead you leave with him!

(BEAT)

Betty, you are one-of-a-kind...

Rosa goes into her bedroom and closes the door. Betty smiles and nods, sipping at her drink as she retires to her room.

INT. POLICE STATION - JAIL CELL - THE NEXT DAY

From his cell Roy Ostrey hears a door open, then the sound of approaching footsteps. It's Ballard.

ROY

Elden, let me out of here. Now! This is ridiculous, I need medical attention!

BALLARD

That's a nice name for what you need...

ROY

Come on, I have to get this dressing off... it itches! And what about my fish? Who is taking care of them?

Ballard doesn't say anything. He's very grim, subdued. Roy has never seen him like this.

BALLARD

Just shut up a second and listen... That, uh... that bar in Arizona? Where you said Betty was?

ROY

What about it?

BALLARD

Any idea where it is?

ROY

Little place called "Williams," why?

BALLARD

I just got something off the wire.
The woman who owns it was murdered
last night.

(BEAT)

Now, I'm not saying I agree with you
or nothing, but... what else do you
know?

ROY

I know plenty.

EXT. LYLA'S HOUSE - DAY

Palatial, spartan. Lyla is sitting in the inner court of her
Lloyd Wright home with George at one knee.

GEORGE

She makes me stretch! I got inside
my character last night like I haven't
done in six years on "Reason". It
was a totally rejuvenating experience.

LYLA

I know, George, I was there. I'm not
denying that she's good.

GEORGE

She's even taken a job as a nurse!

(BEAT)

David Ravell's getting boring, Lyla.

LYLA

We know that...

GEORGE

Can I have an evil twin?

LYLA

No, George, we've already done that
with Lonnie. The blind one last year,
remember?

GEORGE

Oh, of course. Who can forget the Emmy?

(BEAT)

Then let me bring Betty to the set and see what happens.

LYLA

I don't know, George...

GEORGE

I'll tell the cast ahead of time. What do you say?

LYLA

I'll think about it.

GEORGE

It'll be like live television! Let's live on the edge a little. You and I can break the mold here!

LYLA

I said I'll think about it.

GEORGE

Fine, but promise me one thing. If we use her, I want to direct those episodes. She's my discovery.

LYLA

Actually, she was my discovery... just like you.

GEORGE

Hmm?

LYLA

"Would you like ground pepper on that salad, Ms. Branch?" Remember?

GEORGE

...yeah.

EXT. L.A. FREEWAY - NIGHT

The black Lincoln Town car hurdles along the 10 Freeway, a revitalized Charlie back at the wheel. Surrounded by traffic, the lights of the city in the distance, the two men push on toward their new destination.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD MOTEL - THE NEXT DAY

The black Lincoln Town Car – now washed and gleaming – is parked in front of a modest motel.

INT. HOLLYWOOD MOTEL / BATHROOM - DAY

Charlie looks like a new man – showered, clear-eyed and energized – he's at the sink shaving as Wesley watches from his seat on the edge of the bathtub.

CHARLIE

So you believed the bartender. Why?

WESLEY

Well... I think I saw her soul.

CHARLIE

That's good. You're learning. But let me tell you why I know she was lying.

(BEAT)

First off, Betty would never fall for a soap star. It's beneath her.

WESLEY

I dunno, that lady sounded pretty sure...

CHARLIE

No, no, Betty came here strictly for business, 'cause it's the biggest market for what she's selling. I should have known it all along. I'm kicking myself as I shave here. So, first thing we...

WESLEY

Wait, wait, wait a minute... that doesn't make sense.

CHARLIE
What doesn't?

WESLEY
You gimme this bullshit Psychic
Friends theory, you believe that
dumbshit trucker, you believe this
woman...

CHARLIE
I never said that I believed...

WESLEY
No, you believed her, we drove all
the way to L.A. so that means you
trusted her that much... so why's
the rest of her story suddenly so
kooky? Huh?

CHARLIE
'Cause I just don't buy it. Call it
instinct. Call it 35 years of
professional know-how...

WESLEY
I call it 'nutty' as my shit after I
eat Almond Roca...

CHARLIE
You need to remember who you're
talking to...

WESLEY
I need to get my goddamn head
examined.
(BEAT)
You can't rule something out on a
whim. Or because she's cute. I've
been following your whims all across
the U.S. of A. and now I'm tired!
Me!

CHARLIE
Wesley...

WESLEY

"It's beneath her..." She's a mother
fucking housewife... nothing's beneath
her!

Wesley stands up for emphasis, pointing a finger in Charlie's personal space. Charlie reacts at this, throwing his razor into the sink and turning on Wesley.

CHARLIE

Boy, you need to get outta my face...
now! You got a feeling, then you do
what you gotta do, but don't you
ever try to tell me my job. Not ever.

It's a standoff. Wesley blinks first. He stalks off and out of sight. In a moment, he returns.

WESLEY

Fine. Just fine... I'll go check
some shit on my own then. And don't
call me 'boy...'

He turns and slams into the door frame. He glares at Charlie, then exits. When the front door BANGS SHUT allows himself to go back to his shaving.

EXT. STUDIO BUILDINGS - DAY

Map in hand, Wesley stand near A GUARD and discreetly asks questions.

WESLEY

...what kinda car's Jasmine drive?

GUARD

Ahh, Mercedes, I think. Black.

WESLEY

Yeah? The sport utility?

GUARD

Uh-huh.

WESLEY

Damn, that's sweet...

(BEAT)

She really that good-looking in person?

GUARD

Better.

WESLEY

Oh fuck...

Wesley looks around covertly, then produces a fifty.

WESLEY

Hey, can you sneak me on the lot?

GUARD

Sure.

Wesley smiles and wanders off, headed toward a series of studio buildings in the distance. The guard watches him go.

GUARD

..it's Sunday, I can sneak anybody on the lot.

INT. HOLLYWOOD MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Charlie toys with matches from the Canyon Ranch Bar. Working off a list of names and phone numbers from his Zaurus, he makes calls from his room.

CHARLIE

Betty Sizemore, she's got ten kilos...
Blonde hair, a great figure... sort
of a whole Doris Day thing going on.
That's what I said – Doris Day. You
could see her working at the U.N.,
or something. 'The U.N.' "United
Nations." Forget it...

(BEAT)

Nobody like that? You're sure? Yeah,
Detroit by way of Kansas... Alright,
let me know if you hear anything,
okay?

He hangs up. Deletes another one off the list and looks out

the window. Checks the now well-worn photo of Betty. He's starting to doubt himself.

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT / BATHROOM - EVENING

Rosa stands in the doorway as Betty, wearing one of Rosa's hotter outfits, puts on her makeup.

BETTY

Are you sure I can borrow this?

ROSA

No, please. Go ahead, it's your funeral...

BETTY

Rosa...

ROSA

Well, what if this guy's just playing with you? What if he's lying about who he is?

BETTY

You should have a little faith in people.

ROSA

Does he ever talk about medicine? His patients, the hospital?

BETTY

All the time. It's always "Loma Vista" this, "Loma Vista" that.

The DOORBELL RINGS. Rosa goes to the front door and looks through the peephole, then opens the door. George McCord, flowers in hand, gives his best leading man smile.

GEORGE

You must be Rosa. I've heard so much about you... I'm George McCord.

ROSA

Not as much as I've heard about you. She's a very nice girl and you better

not hurt her.

GEORGE

What?

Betty appears.

BETTY

Rosa, so you've met David?

ROSA

Sure did! And a funny thing, Betty,
he introduced himself to me as George!

BETTY

Oh, he does that.

(hugging him)

It's this silly game he plays. Half
the people who know him call him
George.

EXT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

GEORGE

I don't think your friend likes me.

BETTY

She's a little jealous, I think. And
confused when it comes to men...

(BEAT)

So where are we going?

GEORGE

Well, first I thought Patina, and
then the Ivy, but then I thought of
somewhere a little more romantic.
Like my place.

INT. GEORGE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Modern glass and steel structure in the hills. Austere. Betty
and George sit on the sofa with the lights low and SOFT MUSIC
playing.

GEORGE

God, I haven't felt like this since

I was with Stella Adler in New York.
You're so... real.

He leans forward slowly to kiss her, but Betty pulls back.

BETTY

You never mentioned a 'Stella' to me.

GEORGE

Didn't I?

BETTY

No, I would have remembered that name. The only Stella I ever knew was a parrot.

(BEAT)

Was this before Leslie? Before us?...

George takes her face in his hands and looks at her.

GEORGE

I've never met anyone like you, Betty.

BETTY

I know, that's why we were meant to be together...

GEORGE

No, I mean your dedication scares me...

BETTY

It's easy to be dedicated, when you care about something...

GEORGE

Yeah, I felt that way, too, when I first started, but now... the hours, the repetition... it's not all glamour and mall openings anymore. Maybe I should've listened to my people and tried to make the crossover to nights earlier, I don't know...

(BEAT)

...I just hope it's not too late for

me. God! Listen to me, "Me, me, me."
It's so easy to get caught up in the
whole ego cycle of this business and
make it all about yourself. Stop,
right? That's it, no more about me
tonight, I promise... Let's talk
about you... what do you think about
me? I'm kidding... Seriously, Betty,
I'm doing all the talking here...

BETTY

...but I love listening to you, so
that's okay...

GEORGE

Thanks. But I'd like to hear what
you're feeling...

BETTY

Well, I just feel that life'll be
much sweeter for you now with me
around. I promise...

GEORGE

You know, I almost believe that...
you're like a warm breeze that's
suddenly blown into my life...

(laughs)

I said that to Leslie, once, at her
funeral, remember?...

BETTY

I remember. You said it to her, but
it was meant for me, wasn't it?

GEORGE

Yes... maybe it was.

She kisses him deeply, then allows herself to fall back on
the sofa, pulling George down on top of her and kissing him
passionately.

INT. HOLLYWOOD MOTEL - THE NEXT DAY

Wesley hands Charlie a newspaper folded open to the
Entertainment section, where there is a picture of Betty

slapping the actor Eric Augustino. George is in b.g.

WESLEY

...so I'm standing there, minding my own business on Hollywood Blvd., checking out Gladys Knight's star-thing there, I look up at this little souvenir shop dude, Chinese dude, reading a paper... and who do I see?

(holding up paper)

That's Lonnie. He's the show's Main Prick. And that is definitely Betty.

Now, that ain't no coincidence...

(BEAT)

I found out where they shoot it, and where the dressing rooms are.

Charlie studies the photo, troubled by something.

CHARLIE

Who's this?

WESLEY

A doctor on the show... why?

Charlie thinks about it, then reaches into his pocket and takes out the photo of Betty with the cardboard David. As he compares the photos, Wesley peeks over his shoulder.

WESLEY

What in the...

(simmering)

What the hell is this? You've been holding out on me. All this fucking time!

CHARLIE

It just didn't fit her profile...

WESLEY

Fuck the profile! That's the same guy!!

CHARLIE

She can't be here because of a... a soap opera. Not a soap opera. That'd

make her...

WESLEY

...crazy! No shit, Shaft!! And you ain't far behind...

CHARLIE

...but she's, no, Betty's smarter than that. She wouldn't be here for a...

WESLEY

I do not know how the fuck you lasted an hour in this job! Dragging our asses around with the answer to our prayers in your motherfucking jacket... a picture of that cunt right next to the...

Charlie cuts Wesley short by grabbing his shirt and pulling him close.

CHARLIE

Don't Don't you talk about Betty like that. I don't care who she ends up being, you never use that word again. Got it?

WESLEY

Man, you have got to get some therapy.

CHARLIE

I said 'got it?'

WESLEY

...yeah, I got it.
(struggling)
Come on, you're stretching out my vest...

CHARLIE

You made your point...
(drops him)
I was wrong.

He carefully folds the paper, pockets the photo and

straightens his clothing. He straps on his holster and checks his weapon for emphasis.

CHARLIE

Now, get yourself ready.

INT. MOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Wesley gathering his gear through the open door. Charlie stands looking at himself in the mirror. Touches at the gray in his hair. As an afterthought, he tosses on a splash of cologne.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

George leads Betty past several standing sets and into the 'operating room' as CREW MEMBERS buzz around. Betty walks with her eyes closed and holding George's hand.

GEORGE

Just a little further... come on...

George stops and puts both hands over Betty's eyes. He looks about expectantly and then uncovers them with a flourish.

GEORGE

Surprise!

Betty stares, slowly trying to take in her new surroundings. It looks like Loma Vista, but something is different. Odd. Cameras, lights, etc. – all the apparatus of a TV show – are in plain sight... And very disorienting.

BETTY

Oh my gosh...I didn't know I was going to meet your friends today... I dressed a little casual.

He leads her to a taped mark on the floor as CAST MEMBERS appear, including JASMINE and BLAKE DANIELS.

GEORGE

That's cute...listen, you got the part, and I'm directing. You've only got four lines today, so I thought I'd just spring it on you. No blocking

or anything, just stand near the nurse's station... we're gonna do a quick walk-through. Alright?

He kisses her cheek and walks off toward the waiting Lyla before she can respond.

VOICE (O.S.)
Quiet on the set!

GEORGE
Traffic was terrible...

LYLA
No, that's fine, we've only got seventy pages to shoot... take your time.

A STAGE MANAGER hands Betty a set of sides and an on-set COSTUMER tries to fit her.

BETTY
Excuse me. What are you doing?

STAGE MANAGER
We'll get you into hair and make-up after this, just put this on...

The other actors take their positions. Lyla watches from behind the cameras as David readies himself. Chloe enters the set with Kleenex tucked into the neck of her costume.

CHLOE
(to Betty)
Hi. I hear you're great. Good luck...

BETTY
What are you doing here? David...

GEORGE
Your lines are in the script, but you can ad lib.

BETTY
Ad lib?

GEORGE

In fact, I want you to ad lib, that's the magic I'm after. I wanna give a whole new feel to the show.

She's sliding toward a complete meltdown.

VOICE

Slate it!

George steps back behind the cameras. Betty's still frozen to her spot, overwhelmed.

GEORGE

Just do what you've been doing. Watch the scene and on your cue take off from there.

VOICE

5-4-3-2...

Chloe and Blake run through their lines lifelessly, then stop when they get to Betty's cue. Their faces loom around her menacingly. Staring. The lights are impossibly bright. People begin to shuffle and stare at one another. Lyla clears her throat as George bounds on stage, still smiling.

GEORGE

Betty?

CHLOE

Are you all right?

BLAKE

(to Chloe)

I think you stepped on my first line...

CHLOE

...I was talking to her.

(to Betty)

Do you need anything...?

She's freezing up. George approaches her.

GEORGE

Betty, I thought this would be the best way. You know, throw you into it...

LYLA

What the hell's going on?

GEORGE

If you need a minute, that's okay. But I thought you'd want to –

BETTY

David, I don't... Can we talk privately for a second?

GEORGE

Stop calling me David. We're on set, for Christ's sake, you don't have to call me David here.

As he pulls away Betty grabs his arm.

BETTY

Why are you doing this to me?

GEORGE

Why am I doing this to you? Isn't this what you wanted?

Lyla approaches.

LYLA

Is there a problem, George?

GEORGE

No! No problem, there is no...

(to Betty, sotto)

What is the problem? Just do that... thing... you do! Come on! You drove me nuts with this for three days, now do it!

George steps back behind the cameras as if nothing's wrong. Betty still hasn't moved. She's shaking with fear. The cast and crew members find it hard to look at her.

LYLA

All right, everybody! That's ten minutes!

GEORGE

No! Let me try this!

JASMINE

(storming off)

This is bullshit!

LYLA

Forget it, George. It was a gamble, it didn't work. Nice try.

GEORGE

Let me try this, goddamnit! SHE'S BEEN DOING IT ALL WEEK, SHE CAN DO IT NOW!

LYLA

I SAID FORGET IT!

George throws down his script and rushes up to Betty, who reaches out to him. He brushes her hands away.

GEORGE

Well, I don't know what you had in mind, but I hope you're happy. I put myself on the line for you, my reputation, and you're making me look like an idiot.

BETTY

What do you mean? What did I do to you...

GEORGE

Who put you up to this? Did my ex-wife ask you to...?

BETTY

David, please –

GEORGE

STOP CALLING ME THAT! MY NAME IS NOT

DAVID, AND IF YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW
THE DIFFERENCE, YOU'RE MORE FUCKED
UP THAN I THOUGHT YOU WERE!

Betty begins to cry.

STAGEHAND

Leave her alone, George!

GEORGE

SHUT THE FUCK UP!! You're a fucking
grip, go grip something!!!

(to Betty)

And you're not an actress, you're
nothing but a soap opera groupie,
aren't you? YOU HAVE NOTHING BETTER
TO DO! DO YOU?? Well, why don't you
get a fucking life, and stop ruining
mine!

Betty stands dead still as George continues to berate her.
ALL SOUND slowly starts to drop out, then comes back abruptly
with a RUSH. Suddenly a light snaps on for her and she stares
at him.

BETTY

I'm sorry... Oh my gosh, are you
George McCord?!

GEORGE

...What? What did you call me?
George... McCord. You're my favorite
actor on...

LYLA

She called you 'George,' George.

BETTY

...did I win some contest?

GEORGE

But I'm David... I mean, I'm not
David, but she thinks I am! You heard
her...

(looking around the
group)

Stop staring at me... I'm not crazy,
she is!

BETTY

Why are you screaming at me? I mean,
what am I... why am I here? I don't...

GEORGE

You're doing this now? After all
the... are you sick? Are you going
to kill me now?

BETTY

No, I... I'll leave. Forgive me if I
caused you all any trouble... I just,
I don't know how I...

(to George)

...I'm sorry.

George watches Betty walk off the set. The cast and crew try
to pretend this scene didn't happen, except for Lyla, who
burns a hole into George's back. Their eyes meet.

GEORGE

What?!

INT. TV STUDIOS / RECEPTION AREA - DAY

George McCord, wearing sunglasses and still angry, strides
into the lobby. Charlie and Wesley stand quickly and take
out their badges as he approaches.

GEORGE

What can I do for you, gentlemen?

CHARLIE

How do you do, Mr. McCord. We're
trying to locate a deranged fan of
yours,... a Ms. Betty...

GEORGE

Deranged. That would be the right
word.

Wesley takes out the photo of Betty.

GEORGE

That won't be necessary. She's staying with a Rosa something... Hernandez, Herrera. I know it's an 'H' sound... in Silverlake.

CHARLIE

Thanks so much. You must get bothered by this kind of thing a lot.

GEORGE

More than you know. Is there anything else?

CHARLIE

No, that should be more than –

GEORGE

Good.

George turns to leave.

WESLEY

Actually, there is one more thing.

George stops. Wesley is suddenly shy, hesitant.

WESLEY

It's just... well... I watch the show too, and you being Dr. Ravell and all, I thought you could maybe get Jasmine to come out here.

GEORGE

You thought wrong.

George pulls away. Wesley grabs his sleeve.

WESLEY

It's just for an autograph. It's not for me...

GEORGE

It never is.

George wrenches free of Wesley's grip and takes off.

Wesley is furious. He catches George in two strides, spins him around and SLAPS him across the face. George's glasses go skittering across the floor. PEOPLE stare.

WESLEY

You need to learn some manners,
friend... reach out to your goddamn
fan base a little more.

Charlie pulls Wesley away. George is frozen to the spot, humiliated, a pink handprint emerging on his cheek.

WESLEY

...and I saw your movie-of-the-week.
It sucked dick!

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD. - DAY

Betty walks aimlessly along a busy street. She moves without direction, in a daze until a glint of bright light hits her, causing her to turn. She is staring at a black Lincoln sitting in a car lot, sunlight dancing off its chrome. She shudders involuntarily at it. Suddenly, she hears a familiar voice.

DEL (O.S.)

What the hell are you doing here?

It's Del. He's in a pastel version of his usual shirt, slacks, and tie.

DEL

Well, are you gonna answer me? What'd
you come here for?

BETTY

I came for love...

DEL

You're not on that soap opera thing
again, are you? 'Cause you know what
that is?

BETTY

It's people with no lives watching
other people's fake lives.

DEL

That's right. So, if you know it,
why are you in trouble?

BETTY

I don't know.

DEL

You sure don't. Who do you think you
are coming to Hollywood, anyway? You
should remember where you came from.
And who you really are.

Del looks up at the sun for a moment, shading his eye from
it.

DEL

I gotta run. Got some serious clients
to meet, with real potential.

(BEAT)

Goddamn, it's hot!

He wipes the sweat from his brow. Betty looks at his
handkerchief and sees that it's soaked in blood. Then back
at his face, now obscured by blood pouring down from his
head. She stares, horrified, and in that moment Del becomes...
a MAN, staring back at her as he wipes the sweat from his
brow.

MAN

Who are you talking to? Are you crazy?

Betty backs away and melts into the flow of PEDESTRIANS.

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - LATER

Rosa comes home from work and tosses her purse and jacket on
the chair. No Betty in her room.

ROSA

Bet-ty!? Did the pizza guy show up
yet?

She emerges from Rosa's bedroom with toiletries and moves to
an open suitcase in her room. She barely acknowledges Rosa.

ROSA
Are you all right?
(no answer)
What happened?
(BEAT)
He dumped you, didn't he? I KNEW IT
WHEN I MET HIM!! He's a loser, like
the rest of them. Mother-fucker!

Rosa now notices Betty packing.

ROSA
What are you doing?

BETTY
I'm going back to... I need to... I
don't know.

Rosa tries to stop Betty for a moment to talk. Betty grabs a
pile of Rosa's clothes and heads for her room.

BETTY
..this is your sweater, right?

ROSA
Where are you going?

BETTY
I have to leave now.

She tries to put Betty's suitcase away.

ROSA
What? No, I'm not gonna let you just
run out of here... You need to talk
about what's going on...

BETTY
You think I'm crazy, Rosa, but you
don't know the half of it. My husband
was, ahh...

ROSA
Your husband?!

BETTY

Yes, I had a husband and he was killed two weeks ago in my kitchen. I was right there...

Rosa stops.

ROSA

Jesus!... What are you saying?

They stare at each other for a beat.

ROSA

What?! That you had something to do with it?

BETTY

I don't know. I'm just starting to remember it now. I don't...

ROSA

Yeah, but your running away isn't going to help you with all this...

BETTY

There was blood everywhere, Rosa. I saw it, I think I watched the whole thing happen... Oh my God...

ROSA

Okay, okay, look, ummm... Let's just talk a little first and you'll feel better, I promise.

The doorbell rings.

ROSA

That's our pizza... You can't go yet.

EXT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Charlie watches Betty undress from a nearby fire escape. He stares at the object of his desperate search with relief and some fascination.

Betty's movements are unhurried, mindless. Charlie stares, mesmerized, until she steps into the shower.

EXT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - STREET - SAME TIME

Wesley gently nudges open the trunk to Betty's LeSabre. The cardboard cut-out of David Ravell pops out at him.

WESLEY

Whoa! What the fuck're you doing here?

He breaks it over his knee and throws it in the gutter, then quickly removes the wing nut holding the spare tire. He removes the tire, then raises the panel on the floor of the trunk as Charlie joins him.

WESLEY

It's all here. It hasn't been touched.

The bottom of the trunk is lined with brown paper-wrapped bricks of cocaine. Charlie stares at it, shaking his head.

WESLEY

You were right. Del wasn't lying.

CHARLIE

Well, you were right about what that bartender said.

Wesley looks at him. He appreciates the compliment.

WESLEY

But you were right first. You gotta follow your instincts.

Charlie takes a long look at Wesley and smiles proudly.

CHARLIE

What do your instincts tell you to do now, kid?

WESLEY

Leave. Take this shit back to Detroit and get the rest of our money.

CHARLIE

We could do that. I could be on my way to Florida, and you could go to Thailand and fuck your brains out.

WESLEY

...but that's not what we're gonna do, is it?

CHARLIE

No... if we don't finish this job, how are we gonna look at ourselves in the mirror? This is it for me, Wesley, she's the last one. My instinct says I gotta see this through with her, and if there's one thing I've tried to teach you here –

WESLEY

It's to follow my instincts. And my instincts say get the fuck out of Dodge.

CHARLIE

No, I said to follow 'my' instincts. Now, we go up there and conclude our business. Case closed.

Charlie walks off. Wesley closes the trunk up and prepares to follow him.

WESLEY

...oh, that's fucking democratic.

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT / HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

At the sound of the BUZZER Rosa goes to the door. She looks through the peephole and sees Charlie holding up a badge.

CHARLIE

I'm Detective Jefferson –

ROSA

Oh... Did Betty call you?

Charlie nods. Rosa opens the door, and he enters with Wesley.

ROSA

She's got problems, but she's no killer. I hope you guys can straighten this out...

Charlie and Wesley exchange a puzzled look.

CHARLIE

We'll do what we can. Where is she?

ROSA

Bet-ty!

(to the men)

Please, go easy on her. She's had a really rough day.

Betty appears. She recognizes the men instantly and freezes. Charlie's eyes wander over her... slowly. Wesley notices.

ROSA

These guys are here to help you, Betty.

BETTY

I don't think so.

(BEAT)

Rosa, I didn't kill Del... they did.

Wesley produces a pistol, sitting Rosa forcibly on the sofa and tapes her mouth and hands. Charlie walks over to Betty.

CHARLIE

We meet again.

He moves closer to her... almost whispers. Wesley steps in and quickly tapes her hands. Charlie stops him.

CHARLIE

Not her mouth...

(to Betty)

I've spent many long hours in a car with your face staring back at me. I've seen it painted on the horizon.

WESLEY

(to Charlie)
What's wrong with you?

A KNOCK at the door ruins Charlie's moment.

ROSA
That's our pizza.

Wesley hustles Rosa out of the room.

CHARLIE
Get rid of them. You understand?

Betty nods, scared, and looks through the peephole. She stares with disbelief at ROY OSTREY. He KNOCKS again. She opens the door a crack.

ROY
Betty! Boy, am I glad to see you!

BETTY
Roy! What are you doing here?

ROY
You're in serious danger!

BETTY
Ahh, look, right now's not very...

ROY
I woulda' been here sooner, but Ballard put me in jail. He still thinks you had Del scalped.

BALLARD
I never said that! Open the door, Betty.

BALLARD shoves Roy aside; Charlie's getting edgy ...

BETTY
Sheriff, I don't...

BALLARD
C'mon, Betty, open up! I got some questions for you about...

ROY

Have you checked the trunk of that car you're driving, Betty? I think there might be...

BETTY

It's not really a good time, guys...

BALLARD

Don't give me that. I've come two thousand miles for this!

Charlie has been listening quietly on the other side of the door and finally snaps.

CHARLIE

Two thousand miles? That's nothing!

He flings the door open, sticks a pistol in Ballard's face and yanks them both inside.

CHARLIE

Hah! You probably flew! I've crossed the river Styx looking for her, pal! I travelled the fucking country to be here!

Charlie slams the door and frisks them, taking a gun and handcuffs from Ballard. Wesley returns with Rosa.

CHARLIE

(to Betty)

Who are these idiots?

BETTY

This is Roy Ostrey, he's a reporter. And this is Sheriff Ballard. We all went to Fair Oaks High together...

CHARLIE

Oh, this is wonderful...

Wesley takes over. He sits Rosa down on the sofa, then pushes Betty down next to her and beckons to Roy.

WESLEY
Come here.

He breaks Roy's nose with his pistol. Roy crumples to the floor, holding his face. Betty starts to scream, but Charlie puts his hand over her mouth.

Wesley tapes Roy's hands together, then beckons to Ballard.

WESLEY
Your turn.

Ballard drops to his knees in a prayer-like position near the aquarium.

BALLARD
I got two kids and a dog...

Wesley grabs his shirtfront and slams him to the floor, then with a foot on his neck, he loops Ballard's arms around one leg of the steel aquarium stand and handcuffs him.

Charlie does nothing but stare at Betty, his eyes locked with hers. Wesley sees it.

WESLEY
Act professional, remember?

Charlie pulls her to her feet.

WESLEY
What are you doing?

Charlie leads Betty out of the room.

WESLEY
No way! This is not professional!

INT. BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Silence. Then Charlie takes out a knife and cuts the tape from Betty's wrists, touching her hair. Gently. He leaves her standing in the corner while he sits on the edge of the bed.

BETTY

...I s'pose you did that so I could take my sweater off or something.

CHARLIE

No, just stand there... lemme look at you a minute.

She does. Charlie stares intently at her.

CHARLIE

Do you know who I am?

BETTY

...I... I know what you are.

CHARLIE

Do you know why I'm here?

BETTY

I've got a pretty good idea. You're here to kill me, so kill me. You want me to be afraid, but I'm not. I don't care who you are, or why you two killed my husband...

Charlie studies her, then sets his gun down on the bed.

CHARLIE

You really... didn't have anything to do with what Del was doing, did you?

BETTY

I have no idea what he was mixed up in... it was always something.

CHARLIE

So you weren't involved with him in his pathetic attempt to diversify?
(off her blank look)
Were you mixed up in the drugs, Betty?

BETTY

Drugs? God, no! I'm totally against drugs.

CHARLIE

Damn, life is strange. I had you figured for this cold-blooded, calculating bitch – Not that I didn't admire you for it.

Charlie slowly folds his knife and pockets it.

BETTY

...well, if you're not going to slit my throat, why'd you come up here?

CHARLIE

...to see you.

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Wesley stands over Ballard, about to tape his mouth. Rosa and Roy are sitting in chairs opposite them, their mouths and wrists already taped.

BALLARD

You killed that bartender in Arizona and the trucker in Texas, didn't you?

WESLEY

How did you find Betty?

BALLARD

I just put it all together. I knew David, Lonnie and Chloe were from that show.

Roy starts freaking out, trying to talk through the tape.

BALLARD

Betty thinks they're real people. It sounded crazy, but it was worth a shot.

Roy is apoplectic...

WESLEY

What do you want?!

Wesley tears his tape off.

ROY

That's a lie! I figured it out! I've been trying to tell this dumbass –

BALLARD

Fuck you, Roy Ostrey!

ROY

– small-time, pissant, Barney Fife –

WESLEY

SHUT UP! Shut the fuck up, both of you, before I kill you!

ROY

I'm the one who watched the show...
I was...

WESLEY

Did Chloe crack?

ROY

Totally. She came apart like a house of cards. They dropped the charges...

WESLEY

Goddamn... how 'bout Jasmine?

ROY

She's a lesbian.

Wesley immediately pulls his gun and points it at Roy's head.

WESLEY

You lie, motherfucker...

ROY

I swear to God!

Rosa STAMPS her feet, drawing Wesley's attention. She tries to talk through the duct tape; gestures for him to come to her.

WESLEY

What?! You scream, you die.

He yanks the tape off. Rosa winces.

ROSA

I have a tape of today's show.

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Betty is sitting on the bed. Charlie leans against the wall, facing her. He has trouble starting this.

CHARLIE

...I never meet people like you. I'm a garbageman of the human condition. I deal with trash, mostly, people willing to trade any part of themselves for a few more minutes of their rotten lives. But you... you're different.

BETTY

I am?

CHARLIE

Sure. You could probably have any thing you wanted... somebody as beautiful and stylish as yourself, and you don't even realize it.

Betty looks curiously over at Charlie.

CHARLIE

I'm appreciably older than you, but my health is good. I take care of myself, and I got some money socked away. You'd never have to work again, that's for sure. I'd treat you like a queen.

BETTY

Umm, I don't think that...

CHARLIE

Wait. Let me get this out.
(clears his throat)

I like the symphony, walks in the rain, sunsets, animals and children. I read passionately, and I like to discuss things. I'm basically conservative, but flexible. I've been involved in the death of thirty-two people, but I can live with that because the world is lighter by thirty-two pieces of shit, excuse my language.

BETTY

"Thirty-two?"

CHARLIE

Well, thirty-three, but I'm not counting Del, on account of you... so, what do you think?

(BEAT)

You probably feel I'm flattering myself to see us together.

BETTY

I don't feel that, no. I just... I'm not really who you think I am.

CHARLIE

No one is, honey. Here, listen to this... "If who I am and who I hope to be should meet one day, I know they will be friends." Now that's beautiful.

Betty is stunned.

BETTY

I wrote that when I was twelve... where'd you get that?!

CHARLIE

(he pulls out the diary)

I know. I borrowed it from your grandparents because I... I... it doesn't matter. Don't worry, they're fine...

(he gives the diary
back)

Look, I used to feel that same way,
said practically those same words,
sitting at night in a foxhole in
Korea...

(BEAT)

I've chased you across the country,
Betty, and I come to find out we're
a lot more alike than you'd think.

BETTY

I thought you were a garbageman of
humanity, or something.

CHARLIE

Yes, but I'd sort of like to put
that behind me now...

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Wesley is engrossed in watching "A Reason to Love." Behind him, Ballard quietly walks his feet up the wall until he's completely upside down. He rubs one foot against the other until one pantleg is above his cowboy boot. Rosa and Roy watch. He finally lifts the boot off. It falls soundlessly onto his chest. A small pistol is revealed, holstered above his ankle. He works the holster open using the edge of the fishtank.

Roy and Rosa COUGH LOUDLY at the same time to cover the noise. Wesley glares at them.

Ballard gets the pistol free. But it falls into the fishtank. The air goes out of Roy's sails. Ballard has fucked up again.

On screen, Chloe and Jasmine kiss and embrace. Wesley reacts as if he was slapped.

WESLEY

..goddamn!

Wesley immediately runs the sequence back to view it again.

Ballard KICKS the wall of the fishtank with his cowboy boot. Roy and Rosa cover the sound again with COUGHING. Wesley

pauses the T.V. and looks around.

WESLEY

What's your problem?

Ballard KICKS at the tank again. But he can't break the glass. Roy can't take it any more. He launches himself at the tank, grabs it by the rim and pulls it down on top of himself. A torrent of water, fish, plants and gravel pours down upon him.

WESLEY

You stupid piece of fuck!

He leaps at Roy and starts kicking him savagely. Rosa throws herself onto Wesley's back, knocking him to the floor. Ballard paws through the muck, scattering fish and gravel everywhere. He spots a glint of metal in the sand.

Wesley struggles out from under Rosa. Just as he gets free, Ballard FIRES, hitting him TWICE into his chest. Wesley stares in disbelief at the blood rushing out of him. Then at Ballard, as if trying to link the two.

He slumps to the floor and opens his mouth to scream...

WESLEY

D-A-A-A-D-D-D-Y-Y-!!!!

Charlie opens the bedroom door.

CHARLIE

Wesley??!

Charlie sees Wesley turn to him as Ballard FIRES again. Wesley's face explodes. The flying lead drives Charlie back to the bedroom.

Crawling through the muck, Roy notices a fish flopping helplessly on the carpet inches from his face.

ROY

Those're Japanese koi!

ROSA

Yes! How'd you know that?

ROY

You gotta get 'em in water right away!

BALLARD

We're in a shootout, Roy! Shut up about the damn fish!

ROY

YOU shut up!

(to Rosa)

They're beautiful, but get them some water.

He gently hands her the fish, then picks up Wesley's nearby gun. Rosa nods; she's amazed that he knew what it was. She looks at Roy in a slightly different way before crawling away toward the kitchen.

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Charlie FIRES back from the doorway.

CHARLIE

Oh, Christ, they shot my boy!

Enraged, he empties his pistol at the living room. Ballard and Roy return fire, and Charlie ducks back in.

CHARLIE

(reloading)

How the hell did this happen? I'm in a goddamn shoot-out! Wesley? What the fuck happened out there?!

He opens the door, and a bullet slams into the doorjamb near his head. He ducks back in.

Charlie sags against the wall, looking toward Betty.

CHARLIE

That's my son! My son is dead!

BETTY

I'm sorry.

CHARLIE

You're sorry? YOU'RE THE REASON WE'RE
HERE!

BETTY

WAIT A SECOND! I AM NOT THE REASON
YOU'RE HERE! I WAS MINDING MY OWN
BUSINESS, LIVING A PERFECTLY BORING
LIFE UNTIL YOU CAME ALONG!

Charlie fights back his grief.

BETTY

What do you want from me?

Charlie can't handle the moment. He breaks for the door, and
BLASTS away. This time he's nicked in the shoulder. He
stumbles back, losing his balance. His gun falls and slides
right into Betty's hand. Equally surprised they stare at one
another.

Charlie slumps over in his defeat as Betty holds a shaky
pistol on him.

CHARLIE

Oh shit...

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Rosa crawls to a flower vase and dumps a second koi into the
water inside. Roy and Ballard crouch behind the open archway,
using the hanging beads as protection.

BALLARD

(checks his gun)

We need ammo... Go check his jacket,
I'll cover you.

ROY

I'm not going out there! Let's wait
for the real police...

BALLARD

You gotta go, we're pinned down!

ROSA

So why can't we just sneak outside?
Huh?

BALLARD

Lady, you don't just run away from
crime... besides, Betty's in there.

ROY

(checking)

You wanna see if he has more shells,
go ahead. I say we wait...

BALLARD

No, no, no... you don't know shit
about procedure! You don't send your
best...

ROY

I've got the working gun, Elden, me!
You wasted all your bullets so you
crawl out there.

Ballard stares at him in disbelief, then back at the closed
bedroom door. Ballard starts off on his belly.

BALLARD

Goddammit...

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - SAME TIME

A LONG BEAT passes. POLICE SIRENS wail in the distance. Betty
moves close to Charlie to look at his shoulder. He watches
her intently.

CHARLIE

If we went out that window right now
we'd have a chance...

BETTY

I better go check on them.

CHARLIE

Wait, Betty... you still haven't
answered me.

BETTY

This is really awkward...

The SIRENS are coming closer. He waves her off.

CHARLIE

Ahh, it's too late, anyway. It's too late.

(BEAT)

Listen, I could shoot my way out, maybe take one of them with me... If you'd gimme my gun back.

BETTY

I'd rather not...

CHARLIE

Betty, I don't wanna shrivel up alone in some stinking prison. No way. I've got some professional pride. And I don't want anybody else to get the credit for taking me out.

BETTY

...what're you saying?

CHARLIE

When a Roman general knew a battle was lost, he'd throw himself on his sword.

Charlie fumbles in his pocket, then pulls out the photo of Betty with the cardboard David Ravell.

CHARLIE

Did... did you really come here because you love this guy?

BETTY

Yes... Not the actor, though, the doctor. I think.

Charlie's sinks slowly to the floor.

CHARLIE

So all this... really was because of

that soap opera? My son is dead
because you came out here to be with
that doctor? A fake doctor?

BETTY

I wouldn't have put it quite that
way, but...

CHARLIE

Wesley didn't even want to come up
here. He warned me, but I insisted...

(BEAT)

I have to ask you, Betty...are you
crazy?

BETTY

I don't think I am.

Charlie remains sitting pensively for a long beat.

CHARLIE

I want you to listen to me, Betty.
People don't lie when they're about
to die.

(BEAT)

You don't need that doctor. You don't
need that actor. You don't need any
man. It's not the forties, honey.
You don't need anybody. You've got
yourself... and that's more than
most people can say.

Charlie reaches out slowly and takes the gun from Betty. She
doesn't fight him. He kisses her hand and steps into the
bathroom and closes the door. A single GUNBLAST sends a shiver
through Betty.

INT. LYLA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

TV Newscast CLOSE SHOT of an ANCHORMAN.

ANCHORMAN

In a story that police say is bizarre,
even for Hollywood, a father-son
team of killers tracked a Kansas
soap opera fan halfway across the

country, only to find themselves the victims in a final, bloody confrontation...

The Anchorman continues as the CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal Lyla and George watching television in a plush living room.

LYLA

This story is beyond belief, which is perfect for us. It's free advertising and it's gonna run for months.

GEORGE

I don't think she can do it. You saw what happened.

LYLA

You fucked it up. Who wouldn't freeze in those circumstances? And I don't care what her problems are. She wouldn't be the first one in that cast with problems. We have nothing to lose by making her an offer.

GEORGE

What about me? Don't you wanna know how I feel about it? I'm the one who...

LYLA

Why would I give a shit how you feel. And I got news for you. I loved your 'icy water' idea the other day... I'm toying with the idea of killing David Ravell off in a boating accident.

GEORGE

That's not a bad idea. How many episodes before he comes back?

Lyla shakes her head "no."

GEORGE

Jesus, don't do that! If it gets

around that you fired me, I'll never
land a pilot.

LYLA

Then do as you're told. Get her back.

INT. TIP TOP DINER - DAY

George and Betty sit across from one another in a booth.
Betty listens patiently. Her former co-workers try to remain
busy but can't help gawking.

GEORGE

I'm sorry for what I did. It was
inexcusable. I'm sorry for the things
I said, and for not respecting you,
and for all the stupid things that...

Darlene approaches, puts a piece of paper on the table.

DARLENE

When you have a minute...

GEORGE

Look, I don't really like the whole
idea of autographs, and I'm kind of
in the middle of...

DARLENE

Don't flatter yourself. It's the
check.

She walks off.

GEORGE

Oh. Of course... sorry.

BETTY

(grabbing it up)

My treat. You were saying... something
about how stupid you've been?

GEORGE

Right... I was. I was an idiot, plain
and simple, and I hope you can find
it in your heart to forgive me. How's

that?

BETTY

Kinda like you'd been saying it since you got on the plane...

GEORGE

I have... did it sound that bad?

BETTY

Mmm-hmm. Listen, I forgive you, Mr. McCord...

GEORGE

George...

BETTY

...George. I do.

(BEAT)

My best friend once said if you were any handsomer it would be a crime...

GEORGE

Thanks...

BETTY

...it's too bad you're such an asshole. 'S the only thing that Del was ever right about.

George winces... accepts it.

GEORGE

No, that's... okay. Fair enough.

(BEAT)

So, now that we've sort of settled the 'asshole' thing, is there any chance you'll come back to the show? At all?

INT. TV DINER - DAY

Dr. David Ravell sits with Nurse Betty in a diner, catching a bite to eat before going back on shift. They smile at one another over their meals.

BETTY

...there's always a chance, David.

DAVID

Right. But will there be a tomorrow,
and the next day, and the next?

BETTY

(whispering to him)

Doctor, if you were any handsomer
it'd be a crime...

DAVID

I guess that means you're free
tonight. Of course, it's up to you...

BETTY

No, it's up to us. I love you, David.
And I want to see you tomorrow, and
the next day, and the next day...
(they kiss)

INT. TIP TOP DINER - DAY

Darlene, the other waitresses, the cooks and assorted
customers gather at the counter to watch Betty on television.
Sheriff Ballard beams from a nearby stool.

INT. SUE ANN'S HOUSE - DAY

The kids are out of control, but Sue Ann's oblivious. She
leaps from her chair.

SUE ANN

That's my best friend!

INT. ROSA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Roy, Rosa, Danny and Sra. Herrera watch Betty lean across
the table, take David's face in her hands and move into a
romantic kiss.

On the sofa, Rosa takes Roy's hand in hers.

POSTSCRIPT:

Rosa Herrera received 11 phone calls off the business cards Betty handed out. But she fell in love with Roy Ostrey, married him and moved to Kansas.

EXT. CAFE SISTINA - ROME - DAY

Betty watches the pilgrims on their way to St. Peter's as she sips a cup of coffee. HER WAITER stands nearby with one eye on a TV set that broadcasts "A Reason to Love" in Italian.

BETTY

Could I get some service here, please?

Without looking, the waiter approaches, tops off her cup and moves back to watching the show. Betty smiles knowingly at this, takes a sip and settles back in her seat. Slowly, the world passes by.

POSTSCRIPT:

Betty Sizemore appeared in 63 episodes of "A Reason to Love." She is using her earnings to pay for a nursing degree and is currently on vacation in Europe. The Europe.

FADE OUT:

THE END