

THE LIMEY

by

LEM DOBBS

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NOTE: THE HARD COPY OF THIS SCRIPT CONTAINED SCENE NUMBERS.  
THEY HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THIS SOFT COPY.

Wilson's first impression of Los Angeles was blue. He was in the sky at the time, so it was a curious reversal, looking down rather than up at the color he had always felt was nature's finest.

Swimming pools. Hundreds of them. Pockmarking the landscape like miniature lakes. A flat landscape of straight streets and square blocks and sparse grass that didn't look quite green enough.

As far as Wilson could remember, he had only ever seen seven or eight swimming pools in his entire life and they had been public ones. Here everyone had their own. Marvellous.

There was the one at the Butlin's holiday camp where he had enjoyed his last legitimate employment -- as driver of a tour bus. And there was the one at Crystal Palace he had gone to once or twice when he was younger. He was most familiar, though, with the Chelsea Baths as he had lived for some time in a flat nearby in what he now thought of as his good years -- before he'd gone grey, went to prison, and found himself in a plane over a foreign town arriving to avenge the death of his daughter.

WHOOSH! The sound of automatic doors opening and --

EXT. ARRIVALS TERMINAL. L.A. AIRPORT. AFTERNOON.

WILSON steps out into the late sunlight and the heat of the day. A slow-motion moment while he gets acclimatized. He wouldn't have ever felt quite this kind of heat before. After such a rigorously air-conditioned interior. Or seen cops wearing guns on their belts. Or black cops, for that matter, with guns on their belts. Or seen people as fat as Americans on their home turf. Things someone from England notices immediately, whether consciously at first or not.

CUT.

EXT. MOTEL. EVENING.

Wilson's not here for comfort. Shown to a shitty room, round

the corner of a typical 2nd-level outside walkway. Airport close by.

INT. MOTEL ROOM. EVENING.

He draws a curtain open across a window in one strong easy glide. His moves are neat. His expressions just as economical, not giving much away. Outside the planes are practically on top of us. The sunset colors strange and chemical.

He's only got one light bag. Unzips, unpacks a few things. Change of clothes, a travel kit, and some familiar items (shaving foam/toothpaste/deodorant) bearing unfamiliar British brand names.

Goes into the bathroom. Turns on the shower in there.

Comes back to sit on the bed. Takes an envelope out of his jacket.

ENVELOPE

Turns it over to see the return address on the back.

CUT.

INT. TAXI. NIGHT.

Wilson in the back. Stares at the impenetrable name on the driver's posted ID. Glances at the driver.

DRIVER glances back at his quiet passenger in the rearview mirror.

CUT.

EXT. SMALL HOUSE. NIGHT.

Wilson walks up a cracked little path to the front door. Lower middle-class street. Two cars in the driveway, one behind the other. Lights on inside the house -- as he rings the bell.

ED RAMA

Answers it. Hispanic. Late 30's. Chairman Mao on his T-shirt notwithstanding, an easygoing sort of fellow. Not looking for any trouble -- anymore. But once did, and able to handle himself if any shows up. Which it has.

WILSON  
Edward Rama?

ED  
Eduardo.  
(rolling the R)  
Rama.

WILSON  
You're home, then.

He turns, waves away the taxi he's kept waiting. While Eduardo Rama waits for an introduction.

WILSON  
My name's Wilson.

Accent speaks for itself. Hard, working-class.

ED  
Wilson?

Knows the name. But just now it's unexpected. He's holding a hot TV dinner, hand protected by a dish towel.

WILSON  
You wrote to me about my daughter.

CUT.

INT. ED'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

Ed takes Wilson inside.

ED  
I didn't expect anyone.

WILSON  
No reason.

ED  
I mean, what has it been -- six months?

WILSON  
Round about, yeah.

They've entered a cauldron of family life. TV blaring (SHOWBIZ TONIGHT!). A couple of younger KIDS yelling "Mama". Their MOTHER shouting back at them from the kitchen (in Spanish) that she only has two hands. A sullen TEENAGER walking by.

ED

I didn't even know who I was writing to --  
just someone with the same last name.  
She never talked about any family.

WILSON

It was better than a telegram.

Ed opens a screen door to the backyard.

EXT. ED'S BACKYARD. NIGHT.

They sit at an outdoor table. Wilson with a TV dinner in front of him now too. Sounds from inside MUTED. Even this little house has a little pool.

WILSON

Who done it, then?

ED

Huh?

WILSON

Snuffed her.

Ed surprised at Wilson's directness. Ed stands nervously.

ED

Now, wait up a second, man.

And paces back and forth.

ED

I never said nothin' about nothin' like that. No, no, no. That's not what I wrote to you.

WILSON

No, but between the lines, eh?  
Mysterious circumstances, and that.

Ed stops pacing.

ED

Look, I sent you that newspaper clipping, all right? I told you what I know. It was an accident. I didn't say anything about anybody being "snuffed."

Beat.

WILSON

This bloke she was bunked up with. This Terry what'sit.

ED

Terry Valentine.

WILSON

Valentine. What's he got to say for himself?

ED

I dunno. What's he gonna say? They had a fight that night, she drove away, she was upset? I don't even know the guy. Don't get me wrong, Jenny and me were friends, but we didn't travel in the same social circles. She had her life, I had mine.

Makes a kind of scoffing gesture: and you can see what my life is.

ED

Valentine came into the restaurant where I work with Jenny a couple times. He's a money guy. Jenny would say, hey, here's my friend Eddie and he would shake my hand and everything, but he wouldn't even see me, you know what I mean.

Wilson gazes up at the sky. Clear night. Stars.

WILSON

How long had she been in the States?  
(as if to himself, somewhat  
wistful)

Near on ten years, wasn't it? Long enough to know her way about, I reckon.

Ed leans down, palms on the tabletop, facing Wilson.

ED

There was an investigation, okay? The car was totalled. Jennifer was ... Her neck was broken. On impact, they said. So she wouldn't have ... felt the effects of the fire.

(helpless shrug)

It happens up there. Happens a lot.

What more can I tell you.

Wilson taps out a cigarette from a pack of "Silk Cut" he's produced from his pocket.

WILSON

What more is there.

ED

I'm just sayin' -- it was a steep hillside. There was no moon that night ...

Wilson's quiet stillness is getting to him.

ED

Coulda happened to anyone, man. I never knew her to be reckless. I mean, sure, she would smoke a little grass, or something, have a few drinks. But that's it, nothing more than that.

WILSON

No, not my girl. Self-control, she had. Point of pride.

(smokes)

And people don't change, do they.

ED

I dunno ... Maybe they do.

Wilson notes the tattoos on Ed's forearms.

WILSON

Going straight, are ya.

Ed looks at him. Sits down again. Keeping his forearms under the table.

ED

(looks away)

Boomerang.

WILSON

Y'what?

ED

I knew when I was droppin' that letter into the mail slot it was gonna come back and smack me in the face.

(looks at Wilson again)

I did my time, okay? My sister, her ol' man's up in Chino right now doin' eight years.

WILSON

(re the family inside)

This ain't your lot?

ED

You kiddin', man? I don't need a wife and screamin' kids. I still got my youth.

And yet -- he lives here. Wilson declines to pursue the matter.

ED

I go to work, try to keep my life together, put all that shit behind me, man. What d'you want from me.

WILSON

(calmly smoking)

I only asked.

Ed sighs. Reaches for one of Wilson's cigarettes.

ED

Couple weeks before she died, Jennifer asked me to drive her downtown. Said she was meeting -- her boyfriend -- Valentine. But I think she was looking for him.

*FLASH CUTS:*

*ED AND JENNIFER. In a car, downtown. She has the same steely intensity as her father. Ed looks a little worried.*

WILSON

(lighting Ed's cigarette)

What, tryin' to catch him with another bird?

ED

That's what I thought, man. But it was not a hotel or nothin' that we went to. It was someplace else.

WILSON

Whereabouts?

*FLASH CUTS:*

*JENNIFER. Talking to a beefy SUPERVISOR. Or talking at him. Either way, he isn't happy.*

*MEAT PUPPETS. Watch instead of working.*

*ED. Taking all this in.*

ED

Bad place, man. Bad people. Some guys loading some trucks. Some kinda deal goin' down.

(anticipating Wilson's next question)

I don't know and I don't care. Maybe they're shipping fava beans to Eskimos.

WILSON

Did Jenny know?

ED

(shrugs)

Valentine wasn't even there. If he was into something, if she was involved -- who can say.

(stands up again)

But I'll tell you something. She stood in front of these dudes, man. Eyeballing them. Checking them out.

(beat)

I felt like she was covering my ass that day.

Unconsciously rubbing his arms where his tattoos are.

ED

I drove her back to Valentine's house.

*FLASH CUT:*

*VALENTINE. Standing in front of his house. His expression says: We have something to discuss.*

ED

He was standing outside waiting for her. That's the only other time I ever saw him.

(a short sad note)

Last time I saw her.

He meets Wilson's gaze. As hard and pointed as a drill through his skull.

CUT.

INT. ED'S CAR. NIGHT.

Ed drives Wilson back to his motel. Wilson silent. Ed still not quite sure who he's dealing with. Is this really or merely a grieving dad?

ED

What you gonna do, man? You gonna go to the cops?

WILSON

Nah, coppers don't do nothing, do they.

ED

Those streets up in the hills, man. Gotta be real careful, keep your eye on the ball. Two o'clock in the morning, it's dark, your mind is all agitated, you're drivin' a little too fast ...

(beat)

Those curves don't kid around.

Could be talking about the girl. Wilson doesn't move. But touch him, he'll explode. Out the window lights are passing, but no landmarks. He might as well be on the moon.

ED

You should talk to Elaine. That was her best friend.

WILSON

She didn't write to me, did she.

ED

She didn't know what to say.

(shrugs)

I thought someone should say something. To someone. With me it was, I don't know -- Jenny liked me for some reason. I felt like I owed her.

WILSON

Who'd Jenny get it off of -- this grass or whatever?

ED

(self-conscious again)

Not me, man. I'm no drug dealer, what you think.

WILSON

(re Ed's tattoos)

I think you didn't get that lot in the Navy, doing your National Service.

ED

I already told you, man. Corcoran. Know what that is? State prison.

WILSON

Nick's a nick, n' it? No matter what state you're in. State of remorse, most likely -- for gettin' caught.

ED

But that's not me anymore. That's when I was into the gang lifestyle. That's not who I am now. Five years in the joint -- that's it for me, man.

Now Wilson drops the clanger.

WILSON

Just got out meself, didn't I.

And Ed turns. Looks at Wilson. Fellow ex-con.

CUT.

EXT. WILSON'S MOTEL. NIGHT.

Wilson out of the car, shuts the passenger door. Ed on the other side, looks over the roof at him.

ED

Go home, man.  
(plane taking off in  
background)  
Get on a plane.

Wilson has other plans.

WILSON

I'll be needing a shooter.

Makes his fingers like a gun. And a clicking sound.

ED

(comes quickly over)  
You're kiddin' me, right?

WILSON

What do I do, then, look in the bleedin'  
Yellow Pages?

ED

(an urgent whisper)  
These are not guys you can just go run a  
number on, man.

WILSON

(looking around)  
Thought perhaps there'd be dispensing  
machines, you know. Bung in your coins,  
come out with a .44 Magnum, fully-loaded.

Ed throws up his hands, walks back to his driver's side door.

ED

Are you a resident of California?  
You gonna fill out forms, man? Do the  
background check? Go through a three-day  
waiting period?

WILSON

Sod that. Gotta get back before my  
probation officer wonders where I've  
skived off to.

ED

Probation? Man, you crazy. They  
shouldn't've let you outta your country,  
much less prison.

WILSON

Travelling on a dodgy passport, n' all.

Walks round to come face to face with Ed once more.

WILSON

Which is why I thought, save some time,  
get what I need under the table, like.

ED

As if resigned and mulling the problem over:

ED  
Under the table?

CUT.

INT. GUN SHOW. DAY.

Hundreds of tables. Under bright lights. Displaying every kind of firearm. Handguns, rifles, shotguns, parts to make machine guns. A weapons bazaar.

WILSON AND ED

Walking around. Even a cool customer like Wilson can't help but be impressed by America's loving embrace of senseless mayhem.

DEALERS

Touting their wares.

VISITORS

Trying out pistol grips -- or pushing baby carriages. Guys in fatigue jackets with toddlers on their shoulders. Women in stretch pants looking for a little something in personal protection.

WILSON

Doesn't know where to look. At the booth featuring "Classic Cowboy Collectibles" -- or the most OBESE COUPLE he's ever seen who just walked by.

PA SYSTEM

Attention: the long-range vermin-shooting panel is due to commence in two minutes in the blue room at the rear of the Convention Center.

... and other anomalous oddball ANNOUNCEMENTS in the background as long as we're here.

DEMONSTRATION

At a booth selling laser attachments.

BEAM SALESMAN

BeamSight II is easily mountable on any shotgun, rifle, or sidearm and will project a small, bright red dot directly

onto the point where your weapon is  
aimed ...

For purposes of display, a smiling YOUNG WOMAN is the  
"target."

WILSON

Walking past, almost subliminally noting the Young Woman with  
the symbol of death on her.

TABLE

A .45 passed from a DEALER's hand to Wilson's.

DEALER

Man knows what he likes.

ED

(he'll talk if Wilson won't)  
Lookin' good.

DEALER

(while Wilson checks)  
That's a high-end item. Total  
reliability.

ED

What'd you call that -- the Protector?

DEALER

Yes, sir. Won't find a better CQC on the  
market.

Wilson's eyes glance up -- but Ed asks the question.

ED

CQ what?

DEALER

Close Quarters Combat. Keep one in my  
own home.

WILSON

Trouble is, I'm not at home, see.  
Fancied a bit of target shooting, y'know,  
while I'm here -- with me mate.

Nods at Ed.

DEALER

Oh really? Where you from?

WILSON

England.

(sighting the weapon)

Only, we saw there was a show on, thought I might pick something up for a price, type of thing.

DEALER

You came to the right place, sir. My wife's second cousin is English. Well, Scotch-Irish. Can I interest you in a holster?

WILSON

Just luck, this, really. Never been to one of these before.

DEALER

You're in gun country now, my friend.

WILSON

(picks up another, checks it out)

Been to the Boat Show.

DEALER

(re Wilson's new selection)

Packs a punch, but it's compact, has accessible features -- makes a nice concealed-carry piece.

ED

(playing the reluctant buyer)

He don't have a concealed weapons permit.

WILSON

Don't have time for a lot of paperwork, y'know. Just popped over on a quick visit.

DEALER

I can take care of the paperwork.

WILSON

Yeah?

DEALER

No problem. If you don't have a problem with me reporting this gun stolen.

A look of understanding between them.

WILSON

No. Not at all.

(to Ed)

Do we?

ED

Not me, man.

WILSON

I mean, it's already a steal, n'it -- what you said -- four hundred for this one?

DEALERS

Well, I'll have to add another two hundred on top of that.

WILSON

Oh, aye?

DEALER

(another look)

... for the paperwork.

CUT.

INT. ED'S CAR. DAY.

Ed drives. Nervous at Wilson handling his new gun purchase beside him.

WILSON

Violation of my parole, this.

(a perfect pause)

-- Goin' abroad.

Ed shakes his head at Wilson's sense of humor.

ED

You hadda show up on a weekend. This weekend. Wouldn't've even been a gun show ... for another month.

WILSON

Fucking out of order, that. Shouldn't be allowed.

As he puts away a box of ammo.

ED

Now what. You gonna take your new arsenal, go visit Terry Valentine, just like that? Boom bam boom.

WILSON

It's only insurance. Can't be too careful. This Terry Valentine, he's probably a wonderful fella. They were together how long?

ED

Five years, I think. Long time.

WILSON

Well, there you are. Jen must've liked him.

Doesn't make Ed feel any better. Nor does the way Wilson seems now to be studying Ed's driving techniques. Paying attention to the way traffic lights and left-turn lanes and cars without clutches work over here.

ED

(remembering)

Jenny told me she met him at the beach. Got blinded by his smile.

(beat)

You believe that shit? Son of a bitch never smiled at me. Buried her at a "private" service. Private for who. Him?

WILSON

(confused)

Hang about. I thought you said he come into the restaurant where you worked with Jenny.

ED

He came in with Jenny to the restaurant where I work. That's not where they met.

WILSON

And that's where you met Jenny.

ED

No, no -- Jenny used to work as a waitress. Before she met him. But that's not where she met me. Not in my restaurant.

WILSON

How'd the two of you hook up, then?

ED

Oh, Jenny was in my acting class.

CUT.

INT. RENTAL CAR. DAY.

Wilson at the wheel himself. Getting the hang of L.A. Driving downtown. Along one of the major boulevards.

Glances at a street sign as he goes by. Picks up the map book on the seat beside him to check his route.

EXT. BOULEVARD. DAY.

Wilson makes a sudden lane change to avoid getting fed in the wrong direction. Gets HONKED by another driver.

EXT. A STREET DOWNTOWN. DAY.

Wilson cruises past a particular building. We don't have to really clearly see it just yet (we saw it in the flash cuts) -- more important we see him seeing it. Casing it with the eyes of a professional. Sniffing it out; the instinct of a predator after prey.

INT. CAR. DAY.

Parks it. Produces the little leather travel kit we saw him unpack at his motel. Unzips it. Under the usual assortment of clippers, razors, etc., is a hidden layer -- storing still more personalized items: a set of select slim lockpicking/cutting tools.

EXT. SIDE STREET. DAY.

Wilson locks the car. Walks away. STAY with him.

AROUND THE CORNER

He walks down the block. A nice long walk. What we get out of it besides a sense of Wilson -- cool cat; ambling along; loner; sun beating down; not bothered; his shadow doubling him -- is this:

The building approaching. The one he has his eye on. The target. It's across the street. A kind of flat windowless

warehouse with adjoining loading yard. Loading yard surrounded by a chain-link fence -- topped with barbed wire.

The actual geography of where he left his car in relation to this building. Safely around the corner. And how he might practically get back to it, either this same way or via a more circuitous route round another block.

The sense you get in downtown L.A. on a lazy Saturday afternoon that you're in a ghost town. Particularly in this shabby kind of industrial section.

EXT. THE BUILDING.

Wilson crosses over to it now. From sunny to shade.

Walks past the chain-link fence. The padlocked gate, big enough to accommodate the (couple of) trucks parked within the compound.

Walks past the closed security door which would appear to be the building's main entrance.

Round the next corner -- SEES there's a steel back door as well.

Comes around this block again. Looking surreptitiously around now. Streets here utterly deserted. Not even a passing car. Crappy residential building on an opposite corner, SPANISH MUSIC blaring from one of the open windows, but not with a direct view on the loading yard fence on this side. Wilson nearing it now -- taking something out of his pocket. One of the mysterious metallic tools from his travel kit. Snaps his wrist, unfolding the tool with a CRACK. Wire cutters.

He doesn't go for the gate, the padlock, like we might have thought. He suddenly drops to one knee, in shadow where the fence meets the adjoining building. SNAP, SNAP, SNAP, SNAP, SNAP -- so quick, with great dexterity, though his face grimaces with the strength he has to exert with each application of pressure -- he cuts just as many links as he knows he needs to push in a little flap of fence and roll under. Whole thing accomplished in seconds.

LOADING YARD

Walks fast to the cover of the trucks. Passes. Looks around. Cement loading docks and bays. Shuttered doors. He jumps up to one, puts his ear to the metal. Listens awhile.

WILSON

Scans the wall for any sign of an alarm box or anything. Then cocks an ear upwards... CAMERA CRANING UP to show us what he hears: an air-conditioning unit HUMMING away. Which means someone must be inside.

Wilson looks back at his entry options. Not the loading doors -- but a conventional door at one end, with a conventional lock his eye zeroes in on. Gets out his tools, going over.

INT. WAREHOUSE HALLWAY.

A SCRATCHING at the door. It opens. He's in.

Waits. Cautious. Nothing. He starts along the hallway.

INT. WAREHOUSE.

A SUPERVISOR (the one from the flash cuts) does a double take as Wilson passes.

SUPERVISOR

Hey!

Wilson stops and turns. Says nothing.

SUPERVISOR

How'd you get in here.

WILSON

Walked.

SUPERVISOR

You walked.

(coming over)

What the hell are you doing here.

WILSON

Looking for a bloke named Valentine.  
Know him?

MEAT PUPPETS (who we saw before as well) who work here gathering. The Supervisor and the Meat Puppets exchange glances.

SUPERVISOR

He's expecting you?

WILSON

(beat)

I doubt it.

The Supervisor moves toward Wilson.

SUPERVISOR

So why would he want to see you.

WILSON

I have a message for him. About Jennifer Wilson.

SUPERVISOR

Jennifer Wilson.

More looks are exchanged.

WILSON

You know her?

SUPERVISOR

Yeah. I know her, all right. She came down here once, stirred up a shitstorm. We lost a full day's work, took me weeks to get back on schedule. If she hadn't a' been Terry's woman I would've broke her jaw. 'Course, she's nobody's problem now.

Wilson stares at him.

WILSON

Is Valentine here?

SUPERVISOR

What do you think?

Wilson looks at the Meat Puppets, the loading area.

WILSON

Where is he, then?

SUPERVISOR

Listen, get the fuck out of here before you get hurt. Who the fuck do you think you are, waltzing in here, asking questions?

Wilson just looks at him.

SUPERVISOR

Do you hear me, asshole?

The Supervisor shoves him. The Meat Puppets move a little in anticipation. Wilson isn't giving any indication that he's going to leave.

SUPERVISOR

Jesus, you really want your ass kicked, don't you?

He pushes Wilson again, hard.

SUPERVISOR

Go on, get outta here.

He pushes Wilson again. Still, Wilson won't leave.

SUPERVISOR

Fuckin' nut. Go on.

This time he tries to slap Wilson. Wilson blocks the Supervisor's hand and then punches him, hard. The Supervisor stumbles back and falls to the floor.

THE MEAT PUPPETS

Move to Wilson. He tries to fend them off, but there are too many. They beat him. When they find that he's armed, they beat him harder.

CUT.

EXT. BUILDING. DAY.

Wilson is taken outside and dumped. After a moment, he gets to his feet. Dusting himself. Reaches for ANOTHER GUN tucked in his lower back. He re-enters the building.

A beat. We hear several SHOTS.

Seconds later, one of the Meat Puppets comes stumbling out of the door, terrified. He runs past us, fast.

A moment later, Wilson emerges, gun in hand.

WILSON

You tell him. You tell him I'm coming!!

CUT.

INT./EXT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. DUSK.

A series of images that prove Valentine (whoever he is) has taste, wealth, and influence, stretching back a good three decades at least.

Walking through some of these shots is a young beauty in a bathing suit named ADHARA. She advances slowly, not entirely sure of herself, and stops to look at things just like we do. At one point she looks to see a BEEFY GUY (GORDON) sitting at the kitchen counter, flipping through a magazine. He looks her up and down, more from reflex than anything.

She continues on. Eventually she emerges through sliding glass doors and on to a patio.

HER POV

A figure by the pool, talking on the phone. His back to us. The pool is spectacular, mosaic tile bottomed.

ADHARA

Approaches, then sits beside him. His voice is soothing, but with the tiniest hint of exasperation that comes with being slightly ahead of everyone.

VALENTINE

(into phone)

Not before. Not before. Think about it. What does it mean? What -- no, I'm not. Think. Yes. See? You figured it out all by yourself. I know. Are we done? Okay.

He hangs up, stands, still doesn't turn.

VALENTINE

Adhara. I told your father, if you're looking for a name, you can't go wrong with a constellation.

ADHARA

I used to hate it. Now I like it.

VALENTINE

Could be worse, he could've named you Reticulum.

He turns and we see him for the first time.

VALENTINE

Polished. Handsome. Charismatic. Especially when he's smiling like he is now. He leans over and kisses her.

VALENTINE

Is there anything in the world that you want or need?

ADHARA

I want to know why you need that scary guy in your house.

VALENTINE

Gordon? He's been with me for years. He's not as tough as he looks.

ADHARA

Then what good is he?

VALENTINE

Is it possible that you're too young to be acquainted with the idea of loyalty?

ADHARA

Is that a problem?

VALENTINE

Not for you, clearly.

ADHARA

I'm loyal to things that make me happy.

VALENTINE

Am I a thing?

ADHARA

Well, you're certainly not a person.

VALENTINE

I'm not.

ADHARA

No. You're not specific enough to be a person. You're more like a vibe.

VALENTINE

I'm so glad we're having this chat.

ADHARA

It's not a knock.

VALENTINE

It's not a compliment.

ADHARA

It's an observation. Like: I'm hungry.  
When are we eating?

VALENTINE

As soon as you get dressed.

ADHARA

What kind of food?

VALENTINE

Anything but Japanese.

ADHARA

Why?

VALENTINE

I'm not into finger foods. Too fussy.

ADHARA

Like you.

VALENTINE

I don't like do-it-yourself cuisine.  
Buffets. Salad bars.

ADHARA

You demand to be served. A fork  
fetishist.

VALENTINE

It's just fuel to me. I'm not there for  
distractions.

ADHARA

For some, eating is a sensual experience.  
The sensual experience.

VALENTINE

That's what Gordon's always saying.

ADHARA

Oh, god.

His cell phone rings.

VALENTINE

(into phone)

Yes.

He listens, then looks up at his balcony, where a MAN (AVERY) stands holding a phone, obviously talking to Valentine.

VALENTINE  
(into phone)  
I'll be there as soon as I can.

He hangs up.

VALENTINE (cont'd)  
We can leave as soon as you're ready.

ADHARA  
Okay.

EXT. BALCONY. EVENING.

Valentine approaches Avery.

VALENTINE  
What.

AVERY  
There's been some trouble downtown.

VALENTINE  
What kind?

AVERY  
What the papers used to call a "gangland slaying."

VALENTINE  
Our black friends?

AVERY  
No, Terry. They don't work like that. Jenny Wilson's father paid a little visit, left a message.

VALENTINE  
I thought he was in prison, in England.

AVERY  
Well, either they have a very liberal work-release program, or he's out, because he's here in L.A., looking for you.

Valentine is a little ruffled. Maybe Avery likes that.

VALENTINE

What do we do?

Beat.

AVERY

We wait, and we watch.

Valentine just looks at him.

EXT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. POOLSIDE. EVENING.

Adhara approaches Valentine, who stands staring at the pool.

ADHARA

Italian?

VALENTINE

I'm sorry.

ADHARA

Italian.

VALENTINE

Who?

ADHARA

Not who, food. Should we get Italian.

VALENTINE

Sure.

Turns to her.

VALENTINE (cont'd)

Yes. Are you ready?

ADHARA

As long as I don't have to pass Gordon again. I'm never ready for that.

He smiles, rises, and offers her his hand.

VALENTINE

No. I know another way out.

She takes it.

CUT.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING. EVENING.

ELAINE on her way in. Handsome woman. Intelligent, capable-looking. Passes Wilson who's leaning somewhere smoking.

ELAINE

Aware as a wary woman will be of a strange man's presence without necessarily having looked at him. Well aware too that he stayed where he was -- so she unworriedly unlocks the building's security gate and goes through to the inner --

COURTYARD

-- and closes the gate behind her, now seeing him amble up, arriving as it CLICKS shut between them. He's looking at her a certain way. She looks back. And knows.

ELAINE

You're Jenny's father.

And the recognition on his part:

WILSON

Had a feeling it was you.

ELAINE

You look alike.

WILSON

(cigarette in hand)

Perhaps it was the smoke.

ELAINE

Not her brand.

WILSON

She used to pinch 'em off me.

(trying to defuse Elaine's cold  
stare)

Funny that. One thing she never tried to  
get me to stop.

Elaine doesn't soften.

ELAINE

Why did you come here?

WILSON

Wanted to talk to you, didn't I?

ELAINE

No, why did you come here?

America.

WILSON

Sort a few things out.

ELAINE

Been busy, have you.

WILSON

How d'you mean?

ELAINE

It's been a while.

WILSON

I was skint -- didn't have no money to get here.

ELAINE

That's not what I heard.

WILSON

What was that, then?

ELAINE

I heard you were -- what's that adorable phrase? -- "at Her Majesty's pleasure."

WILSON

It was the bars, then.

Indicating his face, viewed by Elaine through the barred security gate that divides them.

ELAINE

In any case, I don't suppose the salary you make sewing mailbags is really commensurate with international airline travel.

WILSON

Sewing mailbags? Me? Never did an honest day's work in my life, dear. Wasn't about to start when I was in stir -- not with all that leisure time on my hands.

ELAINE

And not with all that buried loot you had waiting for you when you got out. From the Wembley Stadium job, wasn't it? Pink Floyd concert receipts. Jenny would've been ... fourteen at the time?

WILSON

(trying to conceal his surprise)

Hardly buried. Earning interest, love. Earning interest in an offshore account. Tidy little premium per annum, that.

ELAINE

Well, that kind of security can't be bought. Must be more comforting than a daughter to greet you.

She turns to walk away.

WILSON

Here, aren't you gonna let me in.

ELAINE

(without looking back)

Try calling me again.

INT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT. EVENING.

She comes in. A modest studio apartment. Puts her bag on the kitchenette countertop. Glances at her answer machine to see if she has any messages. The phone RINGS. She sits down glumly on her couch, holds her head in her hands.

EXT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT BUILDING. EVENING.

Wilson gives up, starts to walk away. The gate BUZZES.

INT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT. EVENING.

Elaine opens the door. Wilson in the hall.

ELAINE

I was just going to toss some vegetable rolls in the microwave, open a can of diet soda.

(beat)

Want to take me out?

CUT.

INT. RESTAURANT. NIGHT.

Wilson and Elaine at a table.

WILSON

... No, I went in for more improving pastimes. Philosophy classes, language courses, European history, all that lark. Did you know that in Paris in the Eighteenth Century there were more rats in people's houses than there were people in people's houses.

ELAINE

Sounds like Beverly Hills.

WILSON

Here, are you always this sarky?

ELAINE

Sarcastic, moi? Maybe I'll mellow when my ship comes in. It's expected any day now. I'm all packed and ready to go.

WILSON

Weren't you on a television series?

ELAINE

(has he seen it?)

If it played in England somebody owes me money. Who told you that -- Eddie?

WILSON

(yes)

Said it went on for donkey's years.

ELAINE

Three seasons. They found that's the limit of human tolerance when it comes to following the adventures of a family of Mormons on the Chisum Trail.

(blinks coquettishly)

I was wife number three -- the ingenue.

WILSON

Oh, it just ended, then.

ELAINE

Now who's being sarcastic?

WILSON

When you've lost as many years as I have,  
love, puts things in perspective, know  
what I mean.

ELAINE

I'm sorry. I guess the rest of us have  
no excuse for wondering where the time  
went.

(raises her drink)

It must've been the bars.

Their food arrives.

ELAINE

It's a kind of prison, doing a series.  
Early to bed, early to rise, no time off  
for good behavior, you grab the boodle  
for as long as it lasts.

(the kicker)

Only difference is you can't get arrested  
afterwards.

Wilson appears fascinated by the cold glasses of water on the  
table. Ice cubes CLINKING as he holds his. A BUSBOY  
bringing them to other people, too, just like that, without  
anyone even asking.

WILSON

I can't believe Jenny told you all that.  
About me. She was always so embarrassed.

ELAINE

Not embarrassed.

WILSON

(correcting)

Ashamed.

ELAINE

Not ashamed.

Wilson looks at her. Okay. What then.

ELAINE

Disappointed.

WILSON

She never told Eddie, though.

ELAINE

She never told anyone else.

(making light now)  
About the convict strain -- or is it  
stain? No, I was privileged. I was  
someone who helped Jenny efface her past.

WILSON

How'd you manage that, then.

ELAINE

When I'm not honing my craft in episodic  
television I do double-duty as a voice  
coach. Not that her accent would have  
hobbled her progress. Not with that  
look.

WILSON

Yeah, well, she started all that in  
London.

ELAINE

Modelling.

WILSON

Learnin' 'ow to speak proper.

(putting it on a bit there.

Then, upper crust:)

Central School of Speech and Drama.

It's no doddle gettin' in there, y'know.

At seventeen. They offered her a place  
at RADA n' all, only she'd've had to wait  
till the next session and she was always  
in hurry to get on, was Jenny. She could  
talk posh without any training, when she  
was knee-high to a grasshopper.

(indicating himself)

Show up the old man, you know.

Elaine smiles slightly. None of this information new to her.  
But warming to this man.

ELAINE

You weren't disappointed in her, then.

WILSON

In Jenny? 'Course not. How could I be.  
'Course I wasn't.

ELAINE

She was twenty-one when she came to me.

(looks at him)

... Straight from leaving you.

WILSON

Footloose and fancy free.

ELAINE

She was happy here. However the two of you might have parted. Don't think she wasn't.

It's because Wilson thinks the opposite that he's here.  
Looks at Elaine.

WILSON

That's the trouble, n' it.  
(hard as nails again)  
She enjoyed life.

CUT.

EXT. OCEANFRONT. NIGHT.

They walk along the seafront. We HEAR the ocean but can't see it.

ELAINE

When did you get in?

WILSON

Yesterday. Afternoon.

ELAINE

(occurs to her)  
You haven't been lurking outside my building all day.

WILSON

No, I had -- some other matters to attend to, you know. Getting a car sorted ...

ELAINE

I might've been away for the weekend.

WILSON

Well, I reckoned, Saturday night, if you were goin' out, you'd probably have to come home first.

ELAINE

And you've seen Eddie Rama.

WILSON

Yeah, saw Eddie, yeah. Me and him are muckers.

Mates. Friends. Makes a kind of bonding gesture.

ELAINE

I should really give him a call. He's a character, isn't he. Well, not to you. I meant to us squares in the outside world.

WILSON

He give me your address.

ELAINE

I gave him yours. Said, here, you want to write, I think this is a relative. I guess I thought I was being true to Jenny. Who told me she didn't have a father -- before proceeding of course to tell me why.

WILSON

Well, don't suppose she did, really, most of her life. On her own after her mum died. Aunts and uncles for a time -- and then the bright lights beckoned.

ELAINE

Were you still married at the time -- to Jenny's mother, I mean?

WILSON

Nah, we split up when Jenny was six. Her second husband done a runner after she got sick. They give me compassionate leave from Parkhurst to go visit her in hospital. We were always mates, me and Jenny's mum. I like to think they're together again now. Y'know. Heavenly choir.

Beat.

ELAINE

The address Jenny gave me, that wasn't a prison, was it?

WILSON

Nah, accommodation address.

ELAINE

What's that, like a P.O. box.

WILSON

Something like that, yeah.

ELAINE

Where you get your bank statements.

Wilson gives a laugh.

WILSON

Well, you gotta have something permanent, don'tcha. Even if it's a hole in the wall. No matter which jug I might be transferred to, I always got someone on the out checks up on it for me, see. Anything I need to know, comes round on visitor's day -- word in my ear.

Elaine pauses.

ELAINE

Some word.

Wilson leans on the wall overlooking the black ocean. Sound of WAVES gently lapping the beach.

WILSON

I already knew. Knew beforehand. When was it supposed to have happened? -- two o'clock in the morning, Eddie said.

ELAINE

(watching him)

That's what was estimated.

WILSON

Eight hours difference between here and London. Would've been, what, ten in the morning, my time. I was just coming out on the yard. Now, I was in the habit of saving my newspaper till then. Bit of fresh air, stretch me legs -- well, stretch the day out, really, that's what you wanna do. And I'll tell ya: I couldn't open the paper. Could not pry the pages apart -- it was like they was glued together. That's how weak my hands went. Thought I was having heart attack, only I knew I wasn't. Bloke come up to

me, he says, Dave, he says, you've gone all white. I said, fuck me, I've been in prison half my life, what d'ya expect. But he was dead on, 'cause I could feel the blood drain right out of me head. And I knew ...

(beat)

Something had happened to Jen.

They stand here a while. Listening to the BREAKERS hit the shore.

CUT.

INT. ELAINE'S APARTMENT. NIGHT.

They come in.

ELAINE

Make yourself at home. Steal something.

That gets her a look.

ELAINE

There's nothing I can't afford to lose.

She goes to make coffee. Wilson looks around.

ELAINE

Do you even know who Terry Valentine is?

WILSON

Well, I gathered something from the article what Eddie sent me. Some sort of pop music producer, wasn't it.

Maybe a smile from Elaine at the quaintness of "pop" music.

ELAINE

Rock n' roll, is what we called it. He's sort of a forgotten figure now, but back when the West Coast was the grooviest place on earth, Terry Valentine was where all the happenings happened. More of a kind of promoter, I guess, whatever that means. Just took that whole Southern California Sixties Zeitgeist and ran with it. Packaged and sold it. Made out like a bandit.

*FLASH CUTS:*

*VALENTINE. At home. Watching as Adhara undresses, either deliberately for him, or just casually. She smiles as she notices he's looking.*

WILSON

What's he done lately.

That line pregnant with meaning. Elaine looks at him. Avoids answering the question actually implied there.

ELAINE

(brings a tray over)

Lives high off the hog and waits for the next big thing. Like me -- but on a grander scale of failure.

WILSON

Now, you shouldn't run yourself down. My employer, Mr. Lindgren --

ELAINE

-- Your employer?

WILSON

-- Mr. Lindgren.

ELAINE

Who's Mr. Lindgren?

WILSON

My employer.

ELAINE

What line is he in.

WILSON

Proprietor of a London firm. Of longstanding.

ELAINE

I see.

WILSON

Based in London, but with international concerns.

ELAINE

I bet.

WILSON

Various enterprises, style of thing.

ELAINE

I thought you said you never did an honest day's work in your life.

WILSON

Well, not to say Mr. Lindgren is dishonest, exactly.

ELAINE

(she gets the picture)  
Right.

WILSON

Anyhow, he's always saying to me, Dave, never run yourself down, son -- 'cause there'll always be plenty of people willing to do it for you.

ELAINE

In what capacity are you employed by this Mr. Lindgren?

WILSON

This and that. Y'know. Ways and means.

ELAINE

-- When he wants someone run down, you're willing to do it for him.

They sort of come together -- in mutual understanding -- and sit down. Coffee steaming.

ELAINE

So what's the deal. You and Terry Valentine at twenty paces. Is that what this is about.

WILSON

Why not.

ELAINE

Are you serious.

WILSON

Have you ever known me not to be.

Elaine looks away:

ELAINE

You fuckin' guys and your dicks.

WILSON

What'd you want me to do. Stay at home,  
twiddlin' me thumbs. Doing sweet F.A.  
[Fuck All].

ELAINE

You don't believe it was a car accident.

WILSON

What do you think.

ELAINE

Terry's never going to give you  
satisfaction. Not the type.

WILSON

Depends, don' it.

ELAINE

On what. What makes you so certain.

WILSON

I'll bloody well ask him.

ELAINE

There's the phone. You want his number.

WILSON

That look again.

WILSON

I got his number.

ELAINE

Past caring.

ELAINE

I'm not going to help you.

She goes into a bathroom. Shutting the door behind her.

WILSON

Sips coffee. Bites into a cookie.

CUT.

EXT. HILLSIDE. UNDERBRUSH. LATE AFTERNOON.

Thickets part and we SEE Wilson scrambling up a rather steep hill. Coming to a ridge where he settles down to look at something O.S. His expression changes by degrees from curiosity to dawning realization to a kind of frustrated disappointment.

INT. WILSON'S CAR (ON THE ROAD BELOW). LATE AFTERNOON.

Ed sits in here, RADIO on. Wilson appears out of the brush, gets in. Ed turns the radio down.

ED

(mindful of the odd car driving  
past)

Told you you wouldn't be able to see  
through that gate.

WILSON

Gate's open. I had a butcher's at the  
house.

ED

(alarmed)

Who'd you butcher at the house?

WILSON

Butcher's hook. Look.

(doesn't anyone speak English  
in this fucking country?)

I don't much reckon those minders of his.

ED

Huh?

WILSON

He's brought in the heavy mob.

ED

What?

WILSON

Extra muscle. Bodyguards.

ED

Has he?

WILSON

They look a right load of wallies.  
Patrolling back and forth outside the

gate, all ponced up like the fuckin'  
Household Cavalry.

(ducks suddenly)  
Watch it.

As one of the "bodyguards" runs by, only fleetingly glimpsed  
by us.

ED  
That was one of them?

WILSON  
(sits up again)  
See what I mean? Wearing bloomin'  
uniforms n' all.

Off Ed's perplexed look ...

EXT. HILLSIDE UNDERBRUSH. LATE AFTERNOON.

Wilson settles into position again, this time with Ed.

WILSON  
Look at that.

Ed just laughs.

WILSON  
What's so fucking funny?

ED  
Those aren't guards. They're valets.

POV

Now we SEE what Wilson had mistaken for Valentine's private  
army. Half a dozen VALETS outside Valentine's hilltop home.  
Dressed in matching attire, a couple of them wielding walkie-  
talkies.

RESUME WILSON AND ED

Ed's still laughing.

WILSON  
Valets. What d'ya mean valets. What is  
he, then, the Earl of fucking Doncaster?

ED  
Valets. They park cars. He's having a  
party.

CUT.

EXT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. LATE AFTERNOON.

Wilson's car pulls up. He and Ed get out. Wilson engages in a mini tug-of-war with a Valet over his car key, it so rubs him the wrong way having to give it up.

WILSON

Keep it handy, mate, all right? We're not stopping long.

He gestures, apparently getting the message across that he wants the car kept close by.

VALET

Yes, sir.

WILSON

Cheers.

Exchanges the key for a card -- which he turns over in his hand and studies curiously as they head inside.

WILSON

Valets, eh? Aren't we all la-de-da.

ED

(nervous being here)

I thought you just wanted to check out the house, man.

WILSON

Well, that's what we're doin', n' it.

ED

No one else is even here yet.

WILSON

First in, first out, that's me.

Looking over to note the multi-car GARAGE off the main house.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. AFTERNOON.

Wilson and Ed are among the first to arrive. A smattering of other GUESTS. Elaborate catered cuisine. They mosey over to the wet bar.

BARTENDER

Gentlemen. What can I get you.

WILSON

(suggesting Ed take first  
crack)

Dubonnet with a twist? Baby sham?  
Tomato juice and Tabasco sauce?

By now his whole dynamic with Ed is a verbal tease.

ED

(to Bartender)

Got a Coke?

INT. VALENTINE'S BEDROOM. AFTERNOON.

Valentine is checking himself in a full-length mirror. TV on in background, sound low (ENTERTAINMENT WEEK!). Not quite satisfied, Valentine crosses to the bathroom.

BATHROOM

Valentine takes one more closer look.

ADHARA (O.S.)

You have the same posters.

Valentine turns.

VALENTINE

Hmm?

ADHARA

Is lounging in the large tub. Staring dreamily at a couple of framed posters on the walls: more 60's psychedelia.

ADHARA

That you have down at your office.

Valentine sits on the edge of the tub. With a nostalgic air as he looks at her: the embodiment of youth.

VALENTINE

Different ones.

He strokes her wet skin. They kiss lightly.

ADHARA

I like the colors.

VALENTINE

We all did.

ADHARA

It must've been a time. A golden moment.

Beat.

VALENTINE

Have you ever dreamed of a place ... you don't really recall ever having been to ... a place that probably doesn't even exist except in your imagination ... somewhere far away, half-remembered when you wake up ... but when you were there you spoke the language, you knew your way around ...

(significant pause)

That was the 60's.

With that exit line (practiced?), he starts to go.

Then pauses, turns again.

VALENTINE

No, it wasn't. Wasn't either.

Comes back to her. Faraway look in his eyes.

VALENTINE

It was '66 ... early '67.

(comes back to now)

That was all.

He goes.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. DOWNSTAIRS HALLWAY. AFTERNOON.

Wilson wanders around, exploring the house. Comes to a wall of photographs. Casually scanning them as he passes slowly by, he's caught up short by one.

POV

A framed photo of JENNY, his daughter.

WILSON

A series of emotions play over his face. He turns -- SEES Valentine coming down the stairs. Valentine joins the party without noticing him.

BY THE BUFFET TABLE

Ed peruses the available food. Valentine comes over to check it out. Glances at Ed without recognizing him.

VALENTINE

Hi.

And goes away. Leaving Ed more nervous than ever.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. AFTERNOON.

Wilson has come up here. Peeks into one room. Moves along to another: the master bedroom. Opens the door gently.

INT. MASTER BATHROOM.

Adhara is still enjoying her bath.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM.

Wilson enters. Careful. Aware that someone's in the adjoining bathroom. The soft RIPPLE of WATER from in there. Perhaps he even glimpses her through the door as he boldly looks around. He notices a video camera on a tripod, a cord running to the television. Suddenly we hear the CHIRP of a cellular phone.

BATHROOM

Adhara reacts.

ADHARA

Shit.

She gets out of the tub and goes for the nearest towel. Quickly wrapping herself, she exits.

BEDROOM

Adhara enters and goes for her purse. She pulls the RINGING phone out and answers it.

ADHARA

Hello? Hey! Great. You got my message?  
Yeah. No, Crestview Terrace, not  
Crestview Place. Yeah, there's like three  
different ways up the hill; the quick way  
is to bear to the right. Sure. Okay.  
Okay. 'Bye!

She hangs up and begins toweling her hair. After a moment she stops. Something isn't right. She looks around the room, and her eyes stop on the TV. Her brow furrows, trying to place the familiar image on the screen: a girl towel-drying her hair by the bed.

ADHARA

That's me.

She looks over to see the video camera, which has been turned on and pointed toward the bed. She's not sure if it's funny or creepy.

CUT.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. DOWNSTAIRS. AFTERNOON.

Valentine mingling, all smiles and movement.

WILSON

At the foot of the stairs. Watches him, all stillness and intensity.

VALENTINE

Catches Wilson's eye for a nanosecond, does a subtle double take, then moves on.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY. AFTERNOON.

Adhara, dressed, looking great, exits the bedroom and heads for the stairwell.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. DOWNSTAIRS. AFTERNOON.

Adhara descends the stairs.

WILSON

Turning to SEE her as she comes down.

ADHARA

Makes her way across the room to Valentine.

ADHARA

Hey, I thought you weren't a buffet person.

VALENTINE

I'm a gracious host.

WILSON

Watching them, when --

GUY

Excuse me?

Wilson looks at him. Reluctantly.

GUY

Don't you work with Ian?

WILSON

Ian?

GUY

I could swear I met you with Ian at the  
EMI offices in London.

WILSON

Sorry. Wasn't me.

GUY

You sure?

WILSON

Unless I'm not who I think I am.

GUY

That's too bad. Ian's got a good thing  
going over there.

WILSON

Yeah?

GUY

Turned that place completely around. 180  
degrees.

WILSON

No kidding.

GUY

What I like about Ian, he believes in a  
chain of command, but not a chain of  
respect, you understand what I'm saying?

WILSON

Right. Chain of respect. That's good,

that.

GUY

Yeah. I really admire the guy. Well.  
Good to meet you.

WILSON

Yeah. Cheers, mate.

The Guy leaves. Wilson sees that Adhara is now on the other side of the room, separated from Valentine. He heads for her.

VALENTINE

Still dealing with people desperate to be the focus of his attention. He notices:

WILSON AND ADHARA

Talking in a corner. She seems attentive.

VALENTINE

In a SERIES OF CUTS, still being the gracious host, still keeping his eyes on:

WILSON AND ADHARA

Who, in a SERIES OF CUTS, continue to talk. Finally, they separate, Wilson heading outside onto a deck.

VALENTINE

Excuses himself from a group of sycophants and goes to her.

ADHARA

Valentine approaches and begins talking to her, low. After a few moments of conversation, they both look toward:

WILSON

On the deck outside. Joining Ed, who's taken refuge out here with a plate of food. What Wilson can't believe when he SEES it -- is that behind Valentine's house, which is on top of a high hill, is nothing but desolate scrub canyon. On the other side of the railing around the deck, which is surely less than regulation height, is a sheer drop into an abyss.

WILSON (cont'd)

(jumps back with only slightly  
affected vertigo)  
Flipping heck.

Ed, a little more accustomed to L.A. architecture, nods in agreement.

ED  
If you could afford a house like this you  
would buy a house like this.

Wilson edges forward to the rail again.

WILSON  
What are we standing on?

ED  
Faith.

They stand there looking out. Quite a view once you get used to it. Breeze.

ED (cont'd)  
(nods to the hazy distance)  
You could see the sea from here if you  
could see it.

WILSON  
Could you?

But now Ed gives Wilson a nudge -- SEEING that Valentine inside the house is making his way out here.

WILSON  
Why don't you go nick one of those little  
cooker what's its warming up the sausages  
cocktail and meet me in the garage. Look  
about for a toolbox while you're at it.

Ed considers. His is not to reason why.

ED  
Okay.

Ed moves off. Valentine steps up, smile fully loaded.

VALENTINE  
Hi. Terry Valentine.

He extends his hand. Wilson shakes it.

WILSON

Pleasure.

VALENTINE

Have we met? There's something I can't quite --

WILSON

EMI in London. I work with Ian.

VALENTINE

Ah.

WILSON

You must know Ian.

VALENTINE

I don't.

WILSON

Great bloke. Really turned things around there. 180 degrees.

VALENTINE

I suppose that's good, unless things were fine the way they were.

WILSON

Oh, I think a shake-up was in order. Definitely. Otherwise, people get lazy, don't they? Forgetful. Start thinking they can get away with things. Gotta shake 'em up now and again, make 'em pay attention.

Wilson looks at him. Valentine looks back. Something about those eyes ...

EXCITED GUY

Terry, Terry ...

The Excited Guy appears, tugging at Valentine.

WILSON

Glad I got to meet you.

EXCITED GUY

Ter ... Ter ... you gotta ...

VALENTINE

Thanks. You, too.

WILSON

Be seein' you.

The Excited Guy ushers Valentine away. Wilson watches him go.

EXCITED GUY

Charles Grodin is here.

CUT.

INT. VALENTINE'S GARAGE. AFTERNOON.

Ed, waiting. Wilson enters.

WILSON

Got it?

Ed displays the Sterno.

WILSON

Toolbox?

Ed points to a table, where a toolbox sits. Wilson crosses to it, begins going through the contents.

WILSON

Put the Sterno on the ground, near the center of the garage.

Ed does. Wilson pulls a brace-and-bit from the toolbox and crosses to the rear of one of the cars. Dropping to the ground, he bores a hole in the gas tank. Ed raises his eyebrows and moves toward the door. Wilson crosses to the other car and puts a hole in that gas tank as well. Then he puts the brace-and-bit back in the toolbox and heads for the exit, Ed right behind him, giving a quick backward glance.

THE GASOLINE

Spills out, slowly but steadily, and slithers toward the garage door.

EXT. BETWEEN VALENTINE'S HOUSE AND GARAGE. AFTERNOON.

Wilson and Ed walk briskly along the path.

WILSON

(gives Ed parking ticket)

Bring the motor around. Bang out in

front, right?

ED

You goin' back inside?

WILSON

One thing I need.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. DOWNSTAIRS. AFTERNOON.

Valentine is talking to Gordon, his beefy bodyguard, and looking around. He stops as he sees Wilson once again stepping onto the deck. He points Wilson out to Gordon, who nods and heads for the deck.

EXT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. AFTERNOON.

Ed hands the ticket to a Valet. He exchanges looks with a couple of the other Valets.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. DOWNSTAIRS. AFTERNOON.

Valentine is talking to Adhara, who is introducing her Girlfriend. As Valentine greets her, he glances outside where Gordon is approaching Wilson on the deck.

EXT. DECK.

Wilson SEES Gordon approaching. Gets ready to greet him. Removes cigarette from mouth, drops it to floor of deck, presses it out under his shoe. Limbers up his shoulders in a subtle way.

Gordon coming towards him. As if to challenge Wilson's legitimacy as an invited guest. Closer. About to speak.

But Wilson doesn't even give him a chance to do that. In quick succession: Wilson HEAD BUTTS Gordon, splintering his nose; KNEES him in the groin; then, using the knee for leverage, grabs Gordon by the lapels -- and heaves him over the railing!

It happened so fast that if anyone else is nearby they probably didn't even notice -- or didn't readily grasp what they saw.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE.

Valentine had turned his attention back to Adhara and her Girlfriend. When he glances back to the deck he's a little concerned not to see Gordon anywhere out there anymore --

just Wilson coming back in.

WILSON

Adjusting his jacket, walking back through the house. Behind him, people are rushing to the railing and looking over. A few yells of "Call an ambulance!" etc. are heard.

VALENTINE

Moves that way.

WILSON

Moving across the room towards the front door. They are heading right toward each other.

WILSON AND VALENTINE

Pass each other, eyes locked, almost dream-like. Wilson's eyes cold, though with the hint of a smile. Valentine throws a last look back before reaching the deck.

EXT. DECK.

Valentine pushes through to look over the railing.

HIS POV

Gordon -- a crumpled, inert heap way down the hill below.

VALENTINE

Turns to look toward the front door. Wilson not to be seen. Valentine pushes through the crowd toward the door.

EXT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. AFTERNOON.

Valentine emerges in time to see Ed and Wilson pulling away. Wilson looks at him, impassive, through the passenger window.

AVERY

Is just arriving in his car. Valentine gestures at him. Suddenly we HEAR a loud, bass-heavy WHHUUMMMPPP.

Valentine (and a few others) turn toward the sound, which came from:

THE GARAGE

There is smoke coming from under the door.

EXT. CANYON ROAD. AFTERNOON.

Wilson's car practically tobogganing back down the hill.  
BOOM! We hear an explosion from back UP the hill.

INT. WILSON'S CAR.

Ed jumps -- though he's driving. The gas pedal his most pressing concern. Negotiating the dangerously winding road comes second. Exhilaration mixed with panic.

WILSON

Steady on.

ED

You steady on, man. What the fuck else did you do back there.

EXT. ROAD.

An especially sharp curve looms ahead.

WILSON

Flinches, grabs a handhold.

CURVE

Car makes it around on two side wheels.

WILSON

Gulps.

WILSON

Bloody hell.

Ed regains control.

AVERY

In his car, takes a different turn.

EXT. ROAD. CAR.

Swerves some more curves. Should be some sense here that a similar skyline route would have been taken by Wilson's daughter on her final drive.

INT. WILSON'S CAR.

ED

Why didn't you just kill him, you had the chance.

WILSON

That would be too easy.

ED

Too easy?

WILSON

He's gotta know why.

ED

You think a fuckin' guy like that ever will? What more do you want, man?

Suddenly out of nowhere -- (a side street) -- BAM! -- another car shoots out to cut them off, sideswiping them.

EXT. ROAD.

Wilson's car SKIDS into a spin from the impact.

THE OTHER CAR

It's Avery. Chased them via a shortcut down the mountain. Now jumps out of his car, levels a shotgun at them and pumps off a BLAST.

WILSON'S CAR

BAM! -- the trunk pops open as the car rights itself. Avery FIRES again, but the upended trunk is a kind of shield, deflecting the shot.

INT. WILSON'S CAR.

Despite the fact that Ed is still in the driver's seat (and managed rather skillfully to avoid crashing) -- Wilson acts like he's not there, grabs the steering wheel, jams the car into reverse, virtually sitting on Ed as he pounds his own foot onto the gas pedal -- and with his ferocious eyes monitoring the door-mirror, steamrolls the car backwards towards Avery.

EXT. ROAD.

Wilson reverses his car like a speeding tank: SMASHING into

Avery's car. Pushing it right off the edge of the road.

AVERY

Falls backwards to the ground as he gets the hell out of the way.

WILSON

Jumps out of his car. Gun drawn. Advancing on Avery with it pointed.

AVERY'S CAR

CRASHING through underbrush down the steep bank of the hillside.

WILSON'S FACE

SOUND of the divebombing car OVER. Another pointed echo of his daughter's fate.

AVERY

Their eyes meet momentarily. And before Wilson can shoot, Avery rolls over the edge of the road himself.

ED

Calls frantically to Wilson from their car.

ED

C'mon, man! C'mon!

SIRENS in the distance.

WILSON

That consuming rage overtaken him again for a second. But the exigencies of the moment snap him out of it.

WILSON

Turns on a dime, goes back to the car. Before he's halfway in, Ed's driving them away again. Trunk at the back BANGING up and down, up and down.

AVERY

Pulls himself back up to the road. Brushing himself off. Looking the way they went.

He gently tosses his shotgun down into some thick brush where maybe he'll retrieve it later.

EXT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. AFTERNOON.

Avery returns, sweating, walking back up the road to where all the action is. Party guests milling outside, waiting for their cars so they can leave. A fire truck, a police car. SMOKE pouring out of Valentine's garage.

Valentine finishes talking to a couple of COPS. Walks over to Avery.

AVERY

You should have let me do the talking.

VALENTINE

Why, because you're my security consultant?

(insecure)

This cocksucker nearly burnt my house down.

AVERY

(more concerned about police presence)

What did you tell them.

Valentine blows air, runs a hand through his hair.

VALENTINE

I told them a long-time employee flipped out. Had a drug problem, refused counselling. Set the garage on fire, then committed suicide. One of my "guests" tried to stop him -- but how do you stop Gordon.

In this context meaning how did that rangy Englishman do it.

VALENTINE

I mean, Gordon must weigh a good four hundred pounds.

AVERY

Heavier than that now. But are there any drugs in that stomach to back up your story.

VALENTINE

As it happens. I didn't make that part up.

EVERY

And where is this guest? Don't they want to interview him.

VALENTINE

I don't know everyone here. He was so traumatized he split.

(another notion)

Maybe he was Gordon's pusher.

Avery stares at Valentine. Impressed at him thinking on his feet.

VALENTINE

Where do you think he is, Mike.

EVERY

(already turning)

We'll find him.

VALENTINE

(stops him)

No. I mean. Not even your people should be involved. Right? It's too close now.

EVERY

You could use a few of my prime shitkickers up here.

VALENTINE

You think I'm staying?

EVERY

There's already gonna be talk about how people close to you keep falling into canyons.

VALENTINE

Well, can we make it one more. Nowhere the fuck near me.

He's being glib, but he's being serious. His open-handed gesture inquiring of Avery: are you up to the task?

EVERY

I have other resources.

He turns to go.

EXT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. CANYON. AFTERNOON.

The huge dead bulk of Gordon hoisted back up to the deck by a paramedic team.

INT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE.

Valentine comes back in. In the living room beyond, Adhara stands anxiously, where she's been waiting for him. Cops visible outside on the deck, peering over the edge.

VALENTINE

Heading that way. Then stops. Backtracks. Something peripherally had caught his eye and he returns to it. His wall of photographs.

AN EMPTY FRAME

The one that had contained the picture of Jenny.

CUT.

INT. WILSON'S CAR. AFTERNOON.

Safely down the hill. Driving away in traffic, Ed calmer now.

WILSON

Pulls the rolled-up photograph of his daughter out of his jacket and looks at it.

CUT.

INT. POOL HALL. NIGHT.

Two characters stand, leaning, against a back wall. Staring ahead, without purpose. Halfheartedly watching a game of pool in progress. Just hanging out. Strange, threatening characters. One of them is young. Lean, hungry-looking. STACY is his name. A shrewd, scheming kid. But definitely a little unhinged. Weirder is his companion. UNCLE JOHN. The title isn't one of courtesy. He's an actual blood relative. Maybe 25 years older than Stacy. But intellectually younger. Physically, much bigger. The man is huge. Nevertheless, the safer of the two -- until Stacy tells him otherwise. Way they're standing next to each other suggests the ease they feel in each other's company. Tight bond. They're good buddies.

AVERY

Walks in. Stops to look around. Spots his two freaks.  
Walks toward them.

DOORWAY

A mysterious black man has followed Avery in. THOMPSON is his name. He hangs back and watches.

AVERY

Makes contact.

AVERY

Stacy.

Stacy turns to see him. Uncle John looks vacantly.

STACY

(bored)

Hey.

AVERY

Come over here.

That was in the way of an order. He nods around the corner where it's less crowded. Stacy stops Uncle John from following, and goes after Avery.

THOMPSON

At the bar. Keeping his eye on them.

AVERY

Speaks softly. Alone with Stacy.

AVERY

How they goin', kid?

STACY

Not bad.

AVERY

How'd you like to kill someone for me?

STACY

Okay.

Avery gives him an envelope.

EVERY

Same as last time -- the rest after.

STACY

(pockets it)

Where do we go?

EVERY

When you find the guy, you'll know.

STACY

What shit is this. I just do it. I don't prepare it.

EVERY

I'll point you in the right direction, but you'll have to take it to the end-zone. He's a hit-and-run gunman -- I figure he's not cruising the Polo Lounge.

STACY

This is un-fucking professional.

EVERY

See, a successful man like me has limitations -- I lose touch at a street level. So I have to depend on a smart boy like you who's closer to the nitty and the gritty than I am.

STACY

Fuck you, Mr. whatever-your-name is. This is a lifestyle I embrace.

EVERY

That's why I'm letting you take care of this. I'm the one with appearances to maintain. But who gives a shit about you? Not even God.

CUT.

INT. WILSON'S MOTEL. NIGHT.

Wilson on the bed. Watching TV (ACCESS HOLLYWOOD!). KNOCK at door. He turns down the TV. Takes a .45 from the springs under the bed. Looks carefully through the peephole in the door.

Opens it. Elaine has come to visit. Lets her in. After closing the door resumes his position on the bed.

Elaine looks around.

ELAINE

I was in the neighborhood. I come down here quite a bit. Watch the planes taking off.

(re this motel)

Study the architecture of early David Lynch.

But she doesn't really have it in her to be ironic right now. Leans back against the door.

Wilson remains silent. He's done the same to Elaine now that he did to Ed. Almost magically induced her to a confessional verge.

Elaine, too, isn't sure she wants to be complicit in this revenge tragedy. But here goes:

ELAINE

Jenny was supposed to come to my place that night. She called me, asked if she could come over. She and Terry had been -- having some trouble. Lately. I don't know about what. On this occasion, it reached some sort of crisis point.

WILSON

She told you all about my details but not about his. Lovely.

ELAINE

She'd never called me like that before. She sounded more ... pissed off -- angry -- than upset or afraid. But she never turned up. I called the house but only got the answer machine. When they found her ... she'd been going the wrong way. Not the direction she'd have gone if she'd been coming to see me. Or coming straight to see me. Who knows. Maybe she just wanted to drive.

She looks at Wilson. Shrugs. That's it. That's all. Isn't it?

WILSON

(measured)  
How did you come to have my address?  
Found it, did you. Among her things.

ELAINE  
You think Terry gave me access to her  
things? Probably sold her clothes.

WILSON  
(gently urging)  
And how did you get it?

Elaine looks at him.

ELAINE  
She gave me your address.

Wilson nods.

ELAINE (cont'd)  
(starting to realize)  
Not long before ...  
(realizing)  
She said if anything ever happened ...  
(realizes)  
That's how you know. That's why you're  
so sure.  
(realization)  
Jenny's telling you.

She's sitting on the bed now.

CUT.

EXT. MEAN STREET. NIGHT.

Stacy, putting on a jacket that says "Bomb Hanoi" comes out  
of the pool hall. Uncle John in tow.

UNCLE JOHN  
How much.

STACY  
Five thousand.

UNCLE JOHN  
(impressed)  
Hey.

STACY  
(taps pocket)

I got half.

UNCLE JOHN  
Makin' trouble for someone?

STACY  
Yeah.

UNCLE JOHN  
Which kind?

STACY  
The forever kind.

BEHIND THEM

Thompson, the mysterious black man, watches them from the hall doorway.

CUT.

EXT. WILSON'S MOTEL. MORNING.

Early.

INT. WILSON'S ROOM.

Wilson and Elaine. Getting dressed. She's in pantyhose. Fastening a bra. He's got trousers on, reaching for a shirt.

WILSON  
How long've you lived here?

Elaine sits on the bed, fastening her skirt. Her bra strap cuts across her bare back.

ELAINE  
This town's been chewing my flesh since ... what we now refer to as "the early 70's."  
(thinks back)  
Christ, my past became nostalgia and no one even asked me.

WILSON  
Early 70's. I was away.  
(tries to remember)  
Maidstone. Possibly Brixton.

ELAINE  
These more highlights from the Zagat

prison guide?

Wilson looks at her: she's the one who goes to bed with ex-cons.

WILSON

You don't seem bothered.

ELAINE

You don't know how I've compromised my standards.

WILSON

Tell us about it.

ELAINE

It's too involved; a lifetime of non-involvement. Anywhere else I'd be an interesting little number, here I'm just SAG number forty-eight thousand and one.  
(quickly)  
SAG meaning Screen Actor's Guild.

WILSON

Oh, I was gonna say ...

ELAINE

Still, there have been rewards. It's sunny. And some of the producers who call even have credits.

WILSON

I can see the attraction.

She glances up at him to try and see how he means that. Is he looking at her or out the window?

ELAINE

What did you do? To make them take the early 70's away from you.

WILSON

A jeweller's up the West End. We tunnelled our way under the shop floor from the public lavatory down the road. Filthy work. Trouble was, the bloody thing collapsed -- after we'd made the grab, 'n all. Would you Adam n' Eve it.

ELAINE

You mean if they'd nabbed you before you

actually broke and entered you would only have been charged with making a mess.

WILSON

We were lucky to be nicked. Me and the lads went down there Sunday evening, we weren't discovered till the Monday. Good job we were still breathing.

ELAINE

It didn't discourage you, though.

WILSON

Hey?

ELAINE

From pursuing your chosen profession.

WILSON

I'll tell ya something: it made me a model prisoner. Put me right off any escape attempts. Tunnel my way to freedom after that experience? Not bloody likely.

ELAINE

I was inside once. I punched a cop at a demo.

WILSON

Did you. What was that in aid of?

ELAINE

Who remembers.

WILSON

Get seven years, did you?

ELAINE

Overnight. What about just now?

WILSON

Just now?

(playful, goes over, ready for more)

Overnight?

ELAINE

You have been away.

(lies back, regards him carefully)

Or is all this just new to you?

WILSON

It's true. Has to be said. I got off to a slow start.

ELAINE

I don't believe it.

WILSON

Honest. Didn't know where to look till I was 21.

ELAINE

Pushing the legal limit even then.

He stands again, vaguely disappointing her.

WILSON

Me mate introduced me to a woman up the street. Funnily enough, she was married to a milkman. Straight up. I said, "Good is she? Been around?" He said, "Good? Listen, mush, it's not that she's been around, it's that she's been around hell of a long time."

He laughs uproariously at that. But the point is: he's sort of complimenting both Elaine and himself. They've been around, had their knocks, they've lasted. Elaine remains unsmiling.

Still leaning back on her elbows on the bed, in bra, skirt, hose, no shoes. She asks again the question Wilson avoided answering.

ELAINE

Your most recent incarceration. What was that for?

And again he evades the answer she wants.

WILSON

It was for nine years.  
(buttoning his shirt)  
The last nine years.

CUT.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY. MORNING.

For the first time, we see the Pacific coastline. Impressive.

And a sleek Italian sports car. Heading north.

INT. SPORTS CAR.

Valentine at the wheel. Adhara besides him.

ADHARA

I've lived in L.A. all my life, I've never done this drive.

VALENTINE

All your life. That happened while I swam the length of my pool.

Adhara looks back over her shoulder. Checking the road behind.

VALENTINE

What's the matter?

ADHARA

Nothing. I guess it's hard to pass on this road.

VALENTINE

The freeway's faster, but lacks a certain majesty.

ADHARA

Just feels like the car behind has been following us the longest time.

VALENTINE

I sure hope so.

INT. THE CAR BEHIND.

A big utility vehicle. With Avery in the front passenger seat. And three bodyguards he's brought along to protect Valentine. RICK driving, TOM and LARRY in the back.

TOM

All I'm sayin' is travel time shouldn't be the same rate. Travel time is down time, right? I mean, we're not even in the same car as the client.

(to Avery)

You told me the job was at the house.

When we get to it. Well, are we shadowing

the client right now or are we just going the same way? The company I was with in Seattle, these distinctions were made. Now, I don't dispute him getting the full whack.

(he means Rick, who's older)  
Seniority and all that. But if I'm getting paid the same hourly rate when we're at the house as I am in this car, that doesn't sit well with me and I feel obliged to say so. 'Cause in Seattle what you're paying now for so-called travel time was half what we got for actual clock-time with the client. So I just feel we should get more when the job actually commences.

After this spineless whining weak-willed sob story, Larry just turns to him and says:

LARRY

... I'd really like to eat your pussy.

CUT.

EXT. ELAINE'S NEIGHBORHOOD. DAY.

Stacy and Uncle John sitting on a bench in a beach setting (though we still don't see the ocean). Or on some grass, maybe, in a little park -- opposite Elaine's building.

People-watching. In their own unique way. Stacy commenting on fellow humanity all around them. TIME CUTS between each comment:

STACY

(after laughing loudly at a  
handicapped person)

I believe in mocking the afflicted. Good for 'em. Makes 'em stronger.

Uncle John picks at the grass or sand. As they kill the day.

STACY

(spotting a woman with a dog)

Ever take a look at the women who work in pet stores? Wow.

STACY

(as a fat jogger passes)

Good luck.

STACY

(watching someone else go by)  
Jesus, are you gay enough or what.

STACY

(barely out of earshot of a  
black woman with dyed blonde  
hair)  
Very attractive. Good idea. Now I  
really want to fuck you.

STACY

(after a long time in silence,  
just staring at someone)  
... you can always tell the ones who'll do  
anal.

STACY

(regarding some other  
beachgoers)  
Kinda makes you wonder why more people  
don't put a bullet through their fuckin'  
skulls, doesn't it.

STACY

(reading a newspaper)  
Looks like they just airbrushed the dick  
out of his mouth.

STACY

(leaning back on his elbows)  
Why don't they have TV shows about people  
whose daily lives you'd be interested in  
watching. Y'know. Like SKINNY LITTLE  
WEAKLING. Or BIG FAT GUY. SICK OLD MAN.  
FAMILY OF LOSERS. Wouldn't that be good?

STACY

(sitting up)  
Two blacks and a Mexican in a car. Who's  
driving?

UNCLE JOHN

I don't know.

STACY

The L.A.P.D.

STACY

(observing a "fast-walker")

Oh yeah, keep doing that. That's really healthy.

STACY

(his gaze following another  
unfortunate)

Can't you do something about your ass?

STACY

(his head turning after someone  
else)

Other people's lives scare the shit out  
of me.

STACY

(watching some guy rooting in a  
trash bin)

"Homeless" people. Fuck them. Remember  
when they were just bums? Everyone with  
an axe to grind. Like to grind in their  
face. Pretty soon there'll be shit-in-  
your-pants rights groups. Stupidity  
activists.

STACY

(glad he's who he is and not  
who he's looking at)

Wonder what it's like being a dumb guy in  
a dumb suit trying to cross the street.

STACY

(staring at another sad couple)

Life sure is a minefield.

STACY

(clocking another female)

Look at that one. She's really been  
used.

STACY

(in a contemplative mode)

I'd love to be famous so I could snub  
ordinary people. Imagine, you're famous,  
you're sitting in a restaurant, some fool  
comes up to you, wants you to sign your  
name on his napkin, his wife is there, it  
would be something these poor saps would  
cherish the rest of their lives, talk  
about to their cretin friends. Bam! You  
tell 'em to FUCK OFF! God, I'd love  
that.

Suddenly Uncle John speaks.

UNCLE JOHN

Is that her? I bet that's her.

Stacy turns.

POV

Across the street, Elaine comes out of her building. (We're supposing this is an apartment building somewhat worth living in that has outdoor parking of some kind, visible from the street, or only street parking.)

CUT.

EXT. SOME STREET. DAY.

Elaine's car on the move. Stacy and Uncle John in a car following.

INT. ELAINE'S CAR.

Going somewhere. Unaware of the creeps in her wake.

INT. STACY/UNCLE JOHN'S CAR.

An "8x10" of Elaine on their back seat. Another picture of her on a page torn from a "Player's Directory."

UNCLE JOHN

Maybe she doesn't even know the English guy.

STACY

(driving)

Avery said she was tight with his daughter.

UNCLE JOHN

That don't mean nothin'.

Stacy knows better than to argue with a moron.

UNCLE JOHN

She's nice lookin'.

STACY

So what.

UNCLE JOHN

I dunno. I just said she's nice lookin'.

STACY

And I said so what. You think she's any happier?

UNCLE JOHN

What d'you mean, any happier?

STACY

Any happier than any other asshole in life.

Pause.

UNCLE JOHN

I dunno. I never met her.

CUT.

INT. SOUND STUDIO. DAY.

On screen: A BEAUTIFUL MODEL -- but speaking in ELAINE'S VOICE.

ELAINE

At a mic. Wearing headphones. Matching her voice to the model's lip movements. Looping this commercial or whatever it is.

INT. HALLWAY.

Wilson. Comes to a window where he can see Elaine inside in the sound-proofed studio.

CUT.

INT. SOUND STUDIO. DAY.

Wilson and Elaine talk while technicians change reels.

ELAINE

-- they want Southern, I do Southern, they want Midwest, I do Midwest, they want tall, blonde, and twenty-two, I'm shit out of luck.

(pauses)

One thing I can't do is English. Americans can't. Shouldn't even try.

And Laurence Olivier couldn't do us.

WILSON

You ever been to London?

ELAINE

Only in the movies.

WILSON

I've 'ardly ever left it.

ELAINE

Yeah, well, you're here now --

(re Wilson's accent)

-- where hurricanes hardly ever happen.

WILSON

I've got the hang of the driving. Found this place all right.

ELAINE

Stick with me, kid. Looks big when you get here but you can cover it in five minutes.

Beat.

ELAINE (cont'd)

So, is there anybody in your family who's not a criminal?

WILSON

Not that I recall.

ELAINE

What about your grandmother?

WILSON

Nah -- she was married to me grandad -- he was as bent as a boomerang -- used to make knuckle-dusters down the shop. Crafty old sod.

ELAINE

He alive to see this?

WILSON

(shakes head)

Dropped dead in the stalls in the Odeon, Muswell Hill. Watching Doris Day.

ELAINE

What'd your father do?

WILSON

Black market during the war.

Elaine shakes her head.

ELAINE

I guess you're just habitual.

WILSON

You sound like my fucking probation officer.

ELAINE

Won't he be looking for you about now?

WILSON

Good luck to him. He couldn't find his prick if he didn't wear Y-fronts.

ELAINE

Minor officials bother you, don't they?

WILSON

Do us a favor. Can't even go have a slash without 'em saying, what're you going in there for?

EXT. ELAINE'S BUILDING. DAY.

Elaine and Wilson enter. Stacy not far behind. Catches outside gate before it slams shut.

CUT.

INT. ELAINE'S BUILDING. DAY.

Wilson and Elaine turn the corner into the corridor approaching her apartment door. Pause to kiss. Walk closer.

And Stacy appears at the other end of the hall. Both arms stretched out with the .38 at the end of them.

STACY

Hi, kids.

Starts to squeeze off a shot. As Wilson pushes Elaine to the floor. As another SHOT rings out from further along the hall behind Stacy. Catching him across the cheek. Only skimming

him. But knocking him down. Bullet chipping the wall.

UNCLE JOHN

Across from Stacy. Freezes, his own gun in hand.

AT THE STAIRS

Three BLACK GUYS. Including Thompson. They approach. Guns pointed at Stacy and Uncle John.

WILSON

Hand on his .45 now. But a fourth Black Guy coming up behind him. Wilson lowers the .45.

ELAINE

Flattened herself back against a wall. Petrified.

STACY

Sits on the floor. Holds his hurt face. Thompson walks over and picks up Stacy's gun. One of the other blacks relieves a reluctant Uncle John of his.

THOMPSON

(stops at Wilson)

Come with us.

If there's any doubt whether Wilson will -- one of the blacks gently puts the muzzle of a gun to Elaine's head. Cocks the hammer.

They all go off down the stairwell. Except Stacy and Uncle John.

Hit men wondering what hit them.

CUT.

INT. ROOM. DAY.

Like Wilson's motel room, another version of a cell.

A small window, high up. Bricks and debris around the floor. And Wilson and Elaine. Sitting, leaning against opposite stone walls.

ELAINE

Tell me you wouldn't prefer a steady

income.

Wilson takes a cigarette pack from a pocket. Lights himself one. Then tosses the stuff over to Elaine.

WILSON

I got a steady income -- I'm on the dole.

ELAINE

(lights up)

A leech on the welfare state in addition.  
You don't miss a trick.

WILSON

I fiddle it. They got me down as an  
immigrant with five kids.

Elaine sort of shares a laugh at that.

ELAINE

Yeah ... Jenny spoke fondly of her  
imaginary siblings.

Though real ones might have been nice. This an unspoken  
thought between them.

ELAINE (cont'd)

Do you remember the last time you saw  
her?

WILSON

Last time might as well've been the  
first. I remember all the times, don't  
I. Watching her grow up --  
(finding the word)  
in increments.

ELAINE

She told me you were a ghost in her life.  
Daddy the friendly ghost. Coming back to  
haunt her.

WILSON

Well, she twigged by the time she was  
eight or nine that daddy wasn't in the  
Royal Marines or doing scientific  
research in the jungles of Borneo or  
playing Iago in a worldwide tour of  
OTHELLO.

ELAINE

Still, you could never ... do what she wanted.

Wilson shakes his head.

WILSON

She used to tell me she'd turn me in.  
(tries to laugh about it)  
Little kid. Ten year old. "If you're naughty, Dad, I'll tell on ya." She didn't want me sent down again, see. When I was planning some job. "I'll tell 'em, Dad, I promise I will. Here, look, I'm calling the Old Bill right now" -- picking up the telephone. I can see her, the phone in her hand. Became a sort of joke between us. Only it wasn't a joke.

ELAINE

She never would have turned you in, not in a million years.

WILSON

I know that. But as time went on ... well, it wasn't a joke, was it? She had a feeling about it -- about the last job -- how long I'd get the hook for. Said she wouldn't be there this time when I got out.

DOOR opens. Thompson. Gun in hand.

CUT.

INT. HALLWAY. DAY.

Thompson leads Wilson past a row of windows. Dockyards, harbor activity outside. Toward a door with things stencilled on it. One of them: US DEPT. OF CUSTOMS.

INT. OFFICE.

A man named FEATHER. Black. Half sitting on the edge of a table. Wilson is shown in.

Wilson at the door. Sizes Feather up at a glance.

WILSON

This is where I come in.

He walks confidently in. Outside, through the window, an

image of a foreign sports car being hoisted in the air by a crane.

There's a chair. Wilson sits in it.

Feather squints a little. Seems ready to listen to whatever Wilson has to say.

WILSON (cont'd)

How's it going, squire, all right? Now listen -- when I was in the nick -- second time, it was -- no, third. Third stretch, yeah. There was this screw had it in for me. That geezer was top of my list. Two years after I was slung, I saw him. He was sitting on a bench in Holland Park. There was no one else about. I coulda gone up behind him and snapped his fucking neck. But I left it. Coulda nobbled him, but I didn't. 'Cos what I thought I wanted wasn't what I wanted. What I thought I was thinking about was something else. This berk on the bench wasn't worth my time. See what I mean? It didn't matter. It meant sod all in the end.

Feather has been listening to this, expressionless. Now he raises a finger as if there's a point he wants clarified.

FEATHER

There's one thing I don't understand.  
(wants to make this clear)  
The thing I don't understand ... is every motherfucking thing you're saying.

WILSON

Look, mush, you're the gov'nor here, I can see that, I'm on your manor now, right. So there's no need to get out of your pram. I'm Johnny-come-lately to all this. Whatever the bollocks between you and this slag Valentine, it's got nothing to do with me. I don't wanna know.

FEATHER

Well, I'll tell you. I believe this Valentine screwed me out of a fair sum of money.

WILSON

I can well believe it. I'm sure he has done, son. He's about as straight as a dog's hind leg.

FEATHER

But I can't be sure. I don't even know who he is. He's too insulated. Too many layers around him.

WILSON

Your guess is as good as mine, mate. I'm here on another matter entirely.

FEATHER

(moves to window)

Yeah, I guess you are.

WILSON

Good job your lot showed up when they did or it would've been me for the high jump.

FEATHER

That dude who works for Valentine. He's the one sent those guys after you. You know that.

WILSON

Yeah. Shouldn't wonder. Must've done.

FEATHER

So what's your beef, pal?

WILSON

Nothing financial. Strictly personal.

(moves to window)

I can see how all this import-export malarkey might give rise to confusion where I'm concerned. A foreigner, showing up unexpectedly, like.

FEATHER

(looks at him)

It was you. Downtown.

WILSON

(all innocent)

Eh?

FEATHER

Because that wasn't anything to do with me. And suspicion has been cast in my

direction.

(pondering)

Didn't make any sense. Choosing those shitheads over me, cutting me out of the deal, then screwing them over too.

WILSON

No, I can reassure you on that point. Valentine was just as surprised by that turn of events as you.

FEATHER

He'd already grabbed more than his allotted cut. Didn't think he'd be so bold as to take all of it.

WILSON

All of what?

FEATHER

Of the deal, man.

WILSON

Oh, yeah, right. The deal.

FEATHER

But if you're mad at him too and he's mad at you ... that must make us pals.

WILSON

As you prefer, squire. As you prefer.

FEATHER

(weary of his life)

In which case I'll just do what I usually do.

WILSON

And that is?

FEATHER

What am I doing?

He's standing at the window, staring out. As if Wilson isn't even in the room any more. A ship being loaded out there. Inspectors with clipboards. Trucks like the ones we saw at that warehouse downtown.

WILSON

Looking the other way.  
(turns to go)

Gotcha.

CUT.

EXT. INN. DAY.

Along the way up the coast.

Through a window we SEE Valentine and Adhara enjoying a pleasant lunch.

The bodyguards hang out by the cars outside with fast food bags and drinks.

TOM

(to Rick)

I mean, how much are you getting? Just as a point of interest. See, I didn't realize there was a sliding scale.

AVERY

At a payphone. His idiots in the background. Dials a number.

INT. POOL HALL. DAY.

Stacy. Nasty bruise on his cheek. Takes a cue off the rack. Chalks up.

STACY

Straight rotation, no shit, call your shot.

UNCLE JOHN

Lemme break.

They're playing against a couple of other creeps.

CREEP

You broke last time.

STACY

Let him break - he likes to break.

CREEP

Fuck you.

STACY

I wouldn't talk.

CREEP

Huh?

STACY

I saw your mother on the Strip last night. She went up to three guys, said she'd like 'em to stick one in each, know what I mean?

Creep rushes Stacy. But doesn't get past Uncle John. Who drops him with one punch. Flooring him between two pool tables. Stacy then goes over. Supports himself with a hand on each table, swings his boot into the thug's face.

BARTENDER

(calls)

Stacy.

Stacy looks. Bartender holds up phone. Stacy goes over.

BARTENDER (cont'd)

I can do without you inhibiting my business.

Stacy just scowls, takes the phone.

STACY

(into phone)

Yeah.

UNCLE JOHN

Breaks.

STACY

Hangs up. Goes back to Uncle John. Picks up his cue again.

STACY (cont'd)

We've been fired.

CUT.

EXT. VALENTINE'S HOUSE. L.A. DAY

Someone we've never seen before and will never see again stands in Valentine's driveway. His name is FIELDING.

A car comes up. Another guy, GRAMMS, sits in it. He waits. Eventually Fielding walks over.

GRAMMS

(re: the burnt garage)  
Valentine had himself a party, I hear.

FIELDING

(by rote)  
My client has already given a statement regarding yesterday's events.

GRAMMS

A statement? I wouldn't mind getting a statement. You see, my client -- the United States Government -- would love to get a statement about a few of the deals going down with your client.

FIELDING

Deals? My client is involved in any number of deals at any given moment. You'd have to be more specific.

GRAMMS

Your client have a deal in Long Beach? How about downtown? There's some folks there -- oh, wait, they're all dead. Any of this ring a bell?

FIELDING

My client is an entrepreneur. I am his lawyer, not his business manager.

GRAMMS

So you wouldn't have any idea how your client continues to make so much fucking money.

FIELDING

He's always been very forward-thinking. He invested wisely.

GRAMMS

Where is he now?

FIELDING

He had urgent business in the north.

Gramms just laughs. Just laughs and laughs. And we leave him laughing. And Fielding not.

CUT.

INT. RESTAURANT. KITCHEN. DAY.

Ed takes off an apron, heads out the door. It's clear that he's not the head chef here -- because the HEAD CHEF, an Anglo, turns, wondering where he's going. Over this we hear:

WILSON

(over)

Where's Big Sur?

ELAINE

(over)

Up the coast.

WILSON

(over)

How far?

ELAINE

(over)

I don't know -- few hours, I guess.

WILSON

(over)

Fancy it?

ELAINE

(over)

I could use a vacation. Of course, I keep forgetting, for you this is a vacation.

WILSON

(over)

Never thought of that.

(grunt of laughter)

Busman's holiday.

ELAINE

(over)

What's in Big Sur?

WILSON

(over)

That's where Valentine's scarpered.

ELAINE

(over)

How do you know?

WILSON

(over)  
Bloke told me.

Beat.

WILSON (cont'd)  
(over)  
You shouldn't go back to your place. Not  
till ... this is resolved.

Another beat.

ELAINE  
(over)  
I hear it's a nice drive.

CUT.

EXT. RESTAURANT. BACK ALLEY.

Ed gets into Wilson's car. Elaine in there too.

CUT.

EXT. COAST HIGHWAY. DAY.

Wilson's rented car. Heading for Big Sur.

INT. CAR.

Ed drives. Wilson beside him. Elaine in the back.

ED  
What d'you say, Elaine?

ELAINE  
Not much -- you?

ED  
Same.

ELAINE  
Uh-huh.

ED  
Last time I saw you, weren't you up for  
some equity-waiver thing?

ELAINE  
Probably.

ED

I was gonna be in that Michael Mann movie, you know -- with Pacino and DeNiro. Got three callbacks.

ELAINE

Really.

ED

Didn't get it.

ELAINE

Well, those are the breaks.

ED

Not no more, they ain't. I quit that acting shit, man.

ELAINE

You just cooking then?

ED

Hell, no. I started writing.

Elaine and Wilson exchange glances.

EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY.

Onwards.

CUT.

INT. BAR. DAY.

Stacy and Uncle John sit and drink. Uncle John lamenting their monetary loss. Stacy thinking to himself.

UNCLE JOHN

We coulda used the other two-and-a-half grand.

STACY

There's more than a measly few grand in this.

UNCLE JOHN

There is?

STACY

Something's on.

UNCLE JOHN

What?

STACY

I happen to know more about Mr. Whatever-his-name-is than he thinks I know about him and his operation.

UNCLE JOHN

You do?

STACY

You bet.

UNCLE JOHN

Like what.

STACY

Like he'd never hire me for real. Not week-to-week. I don't have the credentials. He thinks I'm just a sociopath, someone he can turn to when he needs "plausible denial."

UNCLE JOHN

Well, we blew it, didn't we? He ain't wrong.

STACY

(savage mimicry)

"He ain't wrong." Listen, I know this asshole who did just go to work for him. Full-time. And this dickhead's parents just told me he took a road trip up the coast. That's the type of individual gets hired, someone who'll shoot his mouth off to his family while on the job.

UNCLE JOHN

I don't get it.

STACY

I don't know who that English guy is. Some kind of --

(finding the word)

-- courier or something. Maybe a seller. Maybe a buyer. But Mr. Avery wanted him, those jigs wanted him -- and I betcha there's a briefcase somewhere.

UNCLE JOHN

What's in it?

STACY

(shrugs)

Drugs? Cash? Both if we're lucky.

UNCLE JOHN

How we gonna get that lucky?

STACY

While they're all fucking each other  
over ... couple of parties like us could  
move right in.

CUT.

EXT. HIGHWAY. DAY.

Wilson's car.

Closer to Big Sur. Scenery more magnificent.

INT. WILSON'S CAR.

Ed still driving. Wilson next to him. Opening a new  
cigarette pack.

ED

I've been wondering something.

WILSON

Again?

ED

Do you have any friends, man?

WILSON

Yeah, I suppose. Call 'em that, yeah.  
Down the boozer Saturday night. Meet  
some of the lads.

ELAINE

(a little more pointed)

Friends and colleagues.

WILSON

You can't count on very many people,  
that's the trouble. Number of times a  
decent job's been cocked up ...

ELAINE

Poor baby.

Little back-seat sarcasm there. Wilson looks kind of bitter.

WILSON

Useless gits. I was gonna do the Post Office once.

ED

What post office?

WILSON

The lot. The whole British bloody Post Office. I had a brilliant plan -- all worked out -- work of genius, it was. Could I get anybody interested? No -- they're too busy pinching orange squash from the milkman. Lazy sods. Jumble sale on in Watford, they'll be up at the crack of dawn.

ELAINE

You're just on a higher plane, Wilson.

WILSON

Too bleeding true, 'n' it.

Flicks some cigarette pack paper out the window.

EXT. HIGHWAY.

The car speeds along.

CUT.

EXT. HOUSE. BIG SUR. DAY.

An impressive clifftop dwelling. Isolated on a winding road. On a beautiful promontory overlooking the sea. Valentine RINGS the DOORBELL (actually CHIME). It's opened by his ex-wife. SUSAN. Very well-maintained. 50-something. Surprised to see him. But not overjoyed.

VALENTINE

Hello there.

SUSAN

What are you doing here?

VALENTINE

Exercising my visitation rights.

SUSAN

Since when?

VALENTINE

I miss my kids.

SUSAN

They're at college. Or doesn't your accountant even tell you where the money goes anymore.

Valentine goes inside.

INT. HOUSE.

He looks around. She doesn't shut the door.

VALENTINE

You've made it ... brighter.

SUSAN

I don't want you here, Terry.

VALENTINE

Sure you do.

He turns to look at her. Smiles. Somehow it doesn't work on her. One of the reasons she divorced him. Just one. She sighs. Resigned to his presence. Starts to close the door.

VALENTINE (cont'd)

Don't shut the door -- I have people with me.

Now she gets it.

SUSAN

What kind of trouble are you in?

VALENTINE

No trouble.

Susan SEES Adhara get out of the sporty car parked in the drive and stand against it in a posture of younger chick defiance.

SUSAN

Surely you can think of somewhere else to take one of your chippies for a quick getaway.

VALENTINE

Susan.

He actually puts his hands on her arms. To hold her firm while he locks onto her eyes. And doesn't smile.

VALENTINE (cont'd)

I just need ... somewhere remote. Away from L.A. For a couple of days.

(now the kicker)

I pay for this house too.

Susan reads him. He's not claiming ownership rights. He's telling her this house, because of the connection to him, is a target of some kind.

SUSAN

What have you done?

The Land Cruiser pulls up outside. Avery emerges, comes over, comes in. Susan notes the bodyguards out there as well.

AVERY

(to Valentine)

We weren't followed.

(to Susan)

Susan.

Valentine lets Susan go. Knowing she's now speechless at what's turned into, as far as she's concerned, a home invasion.

VALENTINE

(moving, looking around)

Where's ... what's-his-name -- Fred --

SUSAN

-- You know his name is Frank.

VALENTINE

Is he here?

SUSAN

You know I don't live with him.

VALENTINE

Go to him. Go to his studio, or writers workshop or artists colony, Esselin retreat, nudist camp --

SUSAN

Are you finished?

VALENTINE

In a couple of days this whole thing --

SUSAN

Who's looking for you?

VALENTINE

Go now.

Encouraging, if not in fact ushering, her towards a bedroom.

SUSAN

It's been five minutes and I'm packing to leave again. I can't believe this.

VALENTINE

That's right, your life is Shit, and I'm to blame. It's that simple.

That does it. Susan turns on him.

SUSAN

It is that simple. I blame you for everything. Losing inhibitions and chicks without bras didn't have to lead to hardcore porno in every American household: that was you. The first on your block to turn on a camera in a hot tub and peddle it to your friends. A little recreational pot didn't inevitably have to lead to the eventual devastation of the inner cities: you made that happen, the first time you bought a bigger stash than you yourself meant to smoke. It happened when you made your first buck hyping some so-called "event" that was over before it began or marketed some "product" whose only value was its instant disposability. You were the first person to see there was a lot of money to be made selling Navajo rugs -- you've even stolen from the fucking Indians! You looked at Charlie Manson when all he had to show for himself was a guitar instead of a knife and saw another merry prankster, the freedom of the frontier. Your pal here --

(Avery)

-- He saw gated communities. Rich people coming to him with their money, terrified of what people like you had left of this society. Why invest in a marriage and children when you had him? He's your oracle. But you couldn't even trust in friendship, could you? Still he's the dog you call for its dinner. Because everything that might once have been fun or nice or sweet you had to turn mean and cold and sour. That was your "genius," Terry. Haven't you read your own press?

CUT.

EXT. MOTEL. EVENING.

Wilson and his friends pull in. Get out of the car. Stretch.

ELAINE

(finding herself at another  
shithole)

What is it, you just like the reassuring  
smell of disinfectant?

Wilson just heads for the motel office. Elaine and Ed follow a little distance behind.

ED

Hey, Elaine. You even know what he's  
saying half the time?

ELAINE

No, but I know what he means.

CUT.

EXT. DECK. BIG SUR HOUSE. NIGHT.

Adhara sways in a hammock. Staring at Valentine. Wanting to know what the hell is going on.

Valentine stands smoking at the rail, looking out over the dark sea. Ignoring Adhara. Avery sits at a table. Bodyguards visible inside the house.

VALENTINE

(finally, to Avery)

Do any of these guys cook?

CUT.

EXT. MOTEL PORCH. EVENING.

Wilson at the car. Elaine and Ed watching.

Ed has gathered that something has developed between Wilson and Elaine. The way she's looking at Wilson.

ED

... Reminds me of Jennifer.

ELAINE

(barely perceptible nod)  
Hard to miss.

Ed sighs. Awkward.

ED

I thought maybe you just came for the ride.

ELAINE

I'd rather be with him than without him.  
I don't want to be found dead in L.A.

Wilson walks back to them. Looking at Ed as if to say, ready to go? At her as if to say ... maybe farewell.

EXT. VALENTINE HOUSE. NIGHT.

Tableau. Evening has descended. Surfaces glisten from a light drizzling rain.

INT. VALENTINE HOUSE, BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Adhara, dressing. Behind her, outside, way out of focus, a figure slithers by.

INT. VALENTINE HOUSE, LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Valentine and Avery sit watching TV (CELEBRITY REPORT!). Tom is behind them in the kitchen, flipping through *Marie Claire* magazine.

VALENTINE

Turns to look through the sliding glass doors.

HIS POV

Beyond the deck stands Larry, his back to us, facing the ocean.

EXT. VALENTINE HOUSE. BACK YARD. NIGHT.

Looking toward the house, Larry in the foreground, facing us. He takes a bite from a cinnamon granola bar, then looks at it unhappily as he chews.

LARRY

Fuck.

EXT. VALENTINE HOUSE, ANOTHER ANGLE. NIGHT.

Looking at the house from the top of the hill. Rick stands in the driveway next to Valentine's car, smoking a cigarette.

REVERSE ANGLE

Wilson and Ed watching him. Wilson nods his head to the left, and Ed moves in that direction. Wilson moves quietly off to the right.

INT. VALENTINE HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Valentine and Avery, still watching TV.

VALENTINE

(re: the channel)

Check the news.

Avery starts looking around.

AVERY

Where's the remote?

Suddenly, we hear a CAR ALARM. Tom looks up from his magazine. Valentine looks to Avery, who shakes his head: It's nothing.

EXT. BIG SUR HOUSE. DRIVEWAY. NIGHT.

Rick turns and looks up the driveway toward the sound. He puts his cigarette out.

EXT. BIG SUR HOUSE. BACK YARD. NIGHT.

Larry has turned toward the sound as well. Through a partially obscured side entrance, he sees Rick walking up the driveway.

EXT. BIG SUR HOUSE. DRIVEWAY. NIGHT.

Rick walks away from us, toward the vehicle (the Land Cruiser they drove here) parked up the driveway. We lose sight of him as he crosses to the driver's side. The alarm goes off. We hold for several beats. He doesn't emerge.

INT. BIG SUR HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Valentine and Avery are still looking for the remote. Avery stops, his attention drawn to the fact that he hasn't heard anything from Larry. He crosses to the window.

HIS POV

The driveway, car at the top partially visible. No sign of Rick.

AVERY

His brow furrows.

VALENTINE

Notices this, looks out toward the backyard.

HIS POV

Same as before, except Larry isn't there.

VALENTINE

Moves to the sliding glass door to get a better look at the deck and back yard. Still no Larry.

VALENTINE

Where's Larry?

AVERY

Leaves the window and moves to Valentine. Tom has joined them. After a beat:

AVERY

Turn all the lights out. I'll get Adhara.

Tom begins looking for the light switches.

VALENTINE

What's happening?

Avery is already heading for the bedroom.

AVERY  
Stay away from the windows.

EXT. BIG SUR HOUSE. BACK YARD. NIGHT.

Tableau. Avery exits the kitchen and takes the surrounding porch to the bedroom. Are we seeing this from someone's POV?

INT. BIG SUR HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

Adhara, finished dressing, looking at herself in the mirror. The lights behind her go off. She turns to see Avery coming toward her to turn off the lights by the mirror.

ADHARA  
Uh, you've heard of knocking?

AVERY  
I need you to come with me.

ADHARA  
Why, what --

He takes her by the arm. Firmly, but not roughly.

AVERY  
Please.

She sees in his expression that something is up.

ADHARA  
Okay.

INT. BIG SUR HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Tom and Valentine have finally found the light switches, and the room is dark. Valentine moves slowly to the window, takes a tentative peek.

HIS POV

The driveway. Hard to see. Is there something moving out by the shed?

AVERY  
(off)  
I thought I said stay away from the window.

AVERY

Entering the kitchen with Adhara in tow. He brings her around behind the counter.

AVERY

Everybody in the kitchen.

Valentine and Tom move to join Avery and Adhara.

AVERY

Behind the counter.

Everyone moves behind the large counter in the center of the kitchen and crouches down. They have a wall behind them and all the windows in front of them.

ADHARA

(scared)

What's going on?

Avery and Tom have drawn their guns.

VALENTINE

We think someone is here.

ADHARA

We think?

VALENTINE

We can't find ...

(what are their names?)

... two of our guys.

TOM

(fucking typical)

Larry and Rick.

ADHARA

Did somebody call the cops?

Tom snorts. Avery looks at Valentine: Haven't you told this girl anything?

VALENTINE

No.

ADHARA

Why not?

VALENTINE

Because --

AVERY

Because I'm taking care of it.

ADHARA

You guys are fucking nuts, I'm calling --

She starts to stand. Valentine pulls her down.

ADHARA

Hey.

TOM

Mr. Avery.

Avery looks to Tom, who nods toward the back porch.

THEIR POV

A silhouetted figure is tentatively making its way along the porch, trying not to be seen. We don't get a very clear glimpse.

AVERY

Draws his gun and takes aim.

THE FIGURE

Careful not to become fully visible, but growing more courageous with each step.

AVERY

Locked on him, waiting.

VALENTINE

Puts Adhara's hand to her ears.

THE FIGURE

We see a little more now than we have before.

AVERY

He sees enough. Squeezes off a series of SHOTS, the muzzle flash strobing the kitchen area like a flashbulb, Adhara and Valentine flinching.

THE FIGURE

Hit. Spinning and collapsing to the ground.

AVERY

Lowers his gun. Turns to Tom.

AVERY

Watch my back.

Avery moves out from behind the counter and heads for the body.

EXT. BIG SUR HOUSE. BACK PORCH. NIGHT.

Avery makes his way to the figure, which is on its stomach and writhing slightly.

AVERY

Careful. Takes the gun and turns the body over.

STACY

Stares up at him, choking on his last few breaths.

AVERY

Puzzled. What the hell is this guy doing here? He starts feeling around Stacy's jacket for anything useful, but is interrupted when his hand EXPLODES, accompanied by the sound of a gunshot. He screams in pain.

INT. BIG SUR HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Valentine and Adhara drop to the floor. Tom, gun raised and pointing, tries to see who shot Avery.

EXT. BIG SUR HOUSE. BACK PORCH. NIGHT.

Avery is turning toward his assailant, but not fast enough. A shot rings out and part of his neck disappears in a blossom of blood. Stunned, he falls on his side, gasping.

AVERY'S POV

Uncle John. Close by, huddled by the lip of the cliff. He starts to move cautiously toward Avery and Stacy.

INT. BIG SUR HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Tom squints, trying to see.

TOM

Fuck.

VALENTINE

What?

TOM

Avery's down.

TOM'S POV

A piece of Uncle John's silhouette appears.

TOM

Fires at it. Didn't hit anything.

TOM

Fuck this.

Tom jumps up and runs for the living room, firing his gun in front of him toward where he last saw Uncle John's silhouette.

LIVING AREA

Tom runs through and reaches the sliding doors to the back porch. A portion of the frame SPLINTERS from a gun shot as he gains access to the other side of the back porch.

EXT. BIG SUR HOUSE. BACK PORCH. NIGHT.

Tom is through the sliding doors and trying to make his way around to the driveway.

UNCLE JOHN

Crouched behind the opposite end of the porch, sticks his head up.

HIS POV

Tom crossing to the steps, slips on the damp wood, tries to right himself.

UNCLE JOHN

Squeezes off two shots.

TOM

Is shot in the ankle as he is about to reach the steps. He yelps in pain, tries to raise his gun.

UNCLE JOHN

Crouched down. A shot flies over his head.

TOM

Stops shooting. Tries dragging his shattered ankle to the steps.

UNCLE JOHN

Looks over the edge of the porch.

HIS POV

Tom turning toward the steps.

UNCLE JOHN

Fires at him.

TOM

Screams again as his elbow of his gun hand disintegrates. He slips on the first step and tumbles down, the gun bouncing beside him.

UNCLE JOHN

Sees this. Stands up to cross the back porch. Takes a step forward but is stopped by a bullet in the chest (about the only clean shot anybody makes). He looks down at himself.

UNCLE JOHN

Shit.

He looks up to SEE:

AVERY

Near death. Gun in his good hand. He squeezes the trigger again.

UNCLE JOHN

A small black hole appears in his cheek. He blinks, begins to raise his hand to his face, and collapses.

AVERY

Exhales and rolls over.

TOM

Still trying to get to his feet. He gives up and just lies there, panting.

A HAND

Reaches for the gun beside Tom. Tilt up with it to reveal:

ED

He puts the gun in his jacket and slides away.

INT. BIG SUR HOUSE. KITCHEN. NIGHT.

Valentine and Adhara are still stuck behind the counter. Valentine sees the shadowy shape of Ed slipping behind the back porch.

VALENTINE

Decides to make a run for it, following Tom's route, away from Ed.

ADHARA

Where are you going?

LIVING ROOM

Valentine runs to the sliding door, smack into:

WILSON

Standing there. Wet. Mad. He grabs Valentine by the shirt and pushes him back into the room.

VALENTINE

Bounces off the couch and onto the floor.

WILSON

Comes toward him.

VALENTINE

Grabs a lamp off an end table and hurls it at Wilson. It careens off Wilson's arm and shatters.

WILSON

Is almost on him now.

VALENTINE

Tries to scramble away. Throwing anything he can get his hands on at.

WILSON

Who keeps coming. He grabs Valentine, pulls him up, then throws him into the television.

VALENTINE

Crashes into the TV face first and bounces to the floor.

WILSON

Goes to him, grabs him by the neck with one hand and pulls out his gun with the other. He seems about to speak when suddenly he screams instead.

WILSON  
AAAAGGGGHHHH!

ADHARA

Has just stuck a kitchen knife into Wilson's back.

WILSON

Turns instinctively and whips the pistol around, smashing Adhara in the mouth.

ADHARA

Hits the ground. She won't be retaliating.

WILSON

In agony, spinning, trying to reach the knife in his back, but IT'S JUST BEYOND HIS REACH.

VALENTINE

Scrambles through the sliding glass door.

EXT. BIG SUR HOUSE. BACK PORCH. NIGHT.

Valentine stumbles out. Notices Avery slumped on the deck, mortally wounded. Goes to him -- as if concerned -- but actually just to take the gun. Then runs off the porch toward the STEPS that lead down to the sea.

WILSON

Comes out after him, the knife still in his back. So intent on catching Valentine he fails at first to notice Avery lying in the shadows.

AVERY

Has just barely managed to reach Stacy's pistol. Raises it weakly. Points it at Wilson.

WILSON

Seems to feel it. Turns. Locks eyes with Avery. Avery could already have shot him. But there's a momentary sense of recognition: both of them just foot soldiers for fat cats -- and Avery's is not worth saving.

AVERY

Lowers the gun. Nods in the direction Valentine went.

AVERY

... that way ...

Wilson moves on. Avery just lies there, presumably to die.

EXT. BIG SUR HOUSE. STEPS. NIGHT.

Valentine hurries down the rickety steps. Trying not to slip in the darkness, though there are tiny Malibu lights illuminating the steep and winding wooden framework.

EXT. BEACH. NIGHT.

A rocky cove. Valentine looks back up the way he came, HEARING the FOOTSTEPS coming down after him. Backs away a few paces on the slippery rocks. Falls.

Lands on the crumpled, dead body of LARRY, the bodyguard, who was thrown off the cliff. Valentine recoils. When Wilson

appears, Valentine FIRES at him. A wild shot that only makes Wilson duck momentarily. Valentine scrambles to his feet, runs on.

WILSON

Jumps down from the steps. Stops for a moment and leans his back against the railing. Bends at the knees slightly.

THE KNIFE

The handle is forced upward just enough to be reachable now.

WILSON

Grimacing, pulls the knife out and discards it.

FURTHER DOWN THE BEACH

Valentine runs. Or tries to. It's dark and the ground is treacherous. The beach runs out pretty soon. Now just rocks. Maybe he thought he could get around the rocks on the point at the other end. But he can't see very far ahead. And the tide is in, water making any escape extremely difficult. He tries to scramble over some rocks. They're wet, slippery. He falls, cries out as he literally breaks an ankle.

WILSON

A dark figure. Coming into focus. Walking inexorably this way.

VALENTINE

Painfully rights himself. A small bone protrudes from his broken ankle. He FIRES at Wilson, gun in one hand, other hand gripping his wrist to try and steady it. Doing his best to aim. But the SHOTS miss their mark.

WILSON

Steadily coming.

VALENTINE

Out of bullets now. Gun CLICKING crazily on empty. He simply drops it.

WILSON

Now stands before him.

THE TWO OF THEM

Both breathing hard.

WILSON

Tell me.

This is not what Valentine expected.

VALENTINE

What.

WILSON

Tell me.

VALENTINE

Tell you ...

WILSON

About Jenny.

(closer)

Tell me about Jenny.

(closer)

About the deal. Whatever fucking deal you had to kill my daughter for when she found out about it, you bastard.

Wilson drops to the ground too, in a passionate fury, starts strangling Valentine.

WILSON

Tell me. Tell me about it, you fucking bastard.

Easing up just enough for Valentine to sputter out a response.

VALENTINE

She could've had the deal! I would've handed it to her if she wanted. I would have given her everything.

WILSON

Why then. Why did you do it!

They're locked in a kind of embrace. Sprayed by the waves crashing into the rocks. Sweating and gasping and exhausted and hurt and furious.

VALENTINE

She didn't want to share it, she wanted to stop it. To stop me. She said she'd turn me in.

WILSON

Shock of recognition on his face. At those words.

VALENTINE

She said, "You go ahead with this, I'll turn you in, Terry."

Wilson sits back. Panting. Totally spent. The two of them. Both on the ground now. Whatever energy they had left drained -- Valentine from his confession, Wilson from hearing it. Valentine shaking, sobbing. Still not realizing the pathetic folly of his actions.

VALENTINE

She was serious. She would have done it. She had the phone in her hand. She was going to do it.

WILSON

Knows that the girl he loved ... loved Valentine, too. Having heard the truth, the last vestige of revenge has vanished. He gets up and walks away. Leaving the quivering shell of Valentine behind.

CUT.

INT. BIG SUR HOUSE. LIVING ROOM. NIGHT.

Adhara wakes up. Hand to her smashed cheek and mouth. But it's not her hand. It's Valentine's. She sort of shuffles away from him along the floor. Sits against a wall holding her face. Valentine sits back against an opposite wall. They stare at each other.

CUT.

INT. PLANE. DAY.

Wilson, lost in thought. Accepts a drink from a FLIGHT ATTENDANT. We can see it pains him to reach for it.

WILSON

Ta.

After setting the glass down, his other hand goes to the shoulder where his stab wound was no doubt only temporarily dealt with.

*FLASH CUTS:*

*WILSON. At the roadside hotel, grimacing.*

*ELAINE. Cleaning his wound.*

Wilson rubs his shoulder. The AMERICAN LADY in the seat beside him heard the way he said thanks to the Flight Attendant.

LADY  
You're English.

A small beat (which he takes each time he responds).

WILSON  
Yeah, that's right.

LADY  
I can never decide what I like better.  
Leaving home, or coming back.

WILSON

Takes this in.

*FLASH CUTS:*

*WILSON. Shaving in the mirror at his L.A. motel. He stops.*

*WILSON. In the car leaving Valentine's house. Fingering the picture of Jenny.*

WILSON  
I would have preferred staying home, me.

LADY  
You're a reluctant traveller, then.

Wilson nods.

*FLASH CUTS:*

*WILSON. In the car with Elaine and Ed, driving back from Big Sur. Everyone in their own world.*

*WILSON. At Ed's house. Saying goodbye.*

WILSON AND ED. *Shake hands.*

ED. *Watching him get into Elaine's car.*

WILSON

Got called out to L.A., unexpected like,  
to do a job of work.

FLASH CUTS:

WILSON. *At the airport, staring at Elaine.*

ELAINE. *Staring back.*

WILSON AND ELAINE. *She embraces him.*

ELAINE. *She watches him leave.*

WILSON. *Disappearing into the terminal.*

LADY

You'll be looking forward to getting  
back, then.

WILSON

Yeah. Another little matter needs  
attending to soon as I return.

LADY

No rest for the wicked.

Wilson nods, exhales.

FLASH CUT:

WILSON. *In the cab on the way to Ed's, at the beginning of  
the film. Watching the lights go by.*

WILSON

Been away a lot.

LADY

Where else?

Longer beat. He actually turns to look at her now. Takes  
her in, then looks forward again.

WILSON

Out on a oil rig. In the North Sea.  
Nine years.

LADY

Nine years?  
(laughs)  
Is that legal?

WILSON

Well, time off for good behavior, you know. I shouldn't have even been there -- it was these other blokes who shoulda gone in my place. I got lumbered with the job they were responsible for. I don't mind pulling me own cart, but not someone else's, know what I mean.

LADY

But you stuck it out, anyway, all that time.

WILSON

I had to, didn't I. Nothing else for it. Then just when I'd finished my nine years -- my contract -- wallop, I had to bugger off to the States.

LADY

(reacting slightly to his  
"colorful" language)  
Sounds like you need a rest.

WILSON

Could do, yeah.

Another beat.

WILSON

But first I gotta give these lads a talking to, these geezers what sent me up the river, in a manner of speaking.

LADY

The ones whose burden you took upon your own shoulders.

WILSON

Yeah.

And he turns away, to the window. Looks at the blue sky. Sips his drink. Then, hard:

WILSON

Them next.

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.