

IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT

written by

Eric Dickson

edixsn1@gmail.com

FADE IN:

EXT. DON'S FOOD MART - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

It's in the later hours and the lot is mostly empty. A few tightly grouped cars occupy the front end.

Out the front door walks the tall and curvaceous figure of GRACIELLA SANCHEZ (20s), sporting a tight fitting sweater and name tag: "Assistant Manager".

Graciella hauls a large handbag loaded down with paperwork and other personals toward the back of the lot.

A BLACK CHEVY IMPALA sits under a FLICKERING LED PARKING LOT LAMP and neighbors a street shrouded in darkness.

Graciella fishes for her keys in the busy handbag.

GRACIELLA

Come on.

She tries her pockets. Nothing. A grim realization hits her as she turns and faces the store.

GRACIELLA (CONT'D)

Are you kidding me?

She buries her hand in the purse -- pissed and tired.

CHIRP-CHIRP! CLICK!

A startled Graciella faces her car. ALL FOUR LIGHTS FLASH as it's being UNLOCKED by sources unknown.

The driver's door swings open. Graciella slowly backs up.

Her STEREO IS CRANKED UP as the doo-wop classic "I Only Have Eyes For You" spills into the lot.

SONG

Sha bop, sha bop...

And out of the car crawls A MAN in a tailored grey suit and bright-colored bow tie. He dons a creepy plastic mask with the features of an ordinary person but with the greased back quaff of a nineteen fifties musician.

Graciella is frozen with fear.

SONG (CONT'D)

My love must be a kind of...blind
love...

EXT. INTERSTATE 10 - DOWNTOWN LA - DAY

A HEAVY SMOG lingers like a slow poison over the impressive city landscape. It's rush hour traffic and hundreds of vehicles trudge along at a snail's pace.

A TOYOTA CAMRY towing a U-HAUL CARGO TRAILER carelessly switches lanes and cuts off an SUV.

HONK-HONK!

ANGRY DRIVER

Asshole!

INT. CAMRY - DAY

SCARLETT MCTIERNEY (22), fresh faced auburn haired beauty and girl next door, stares out at the tall and intimidating structures of Downtown Los Angeles.

SCARLETT

Holy shit.

Her facial expressions reflect a small town naivete that could be potentially dangerous here.

She quickly tires of the noise and CRANKS THE VOLUME on her car stereo. A talk show in progress.

Loud mouth shock jock SCOTT AVERY doing his usual afternoon commentary on life in the big city.

AVERY (O.S.)

That's right, LA. It's Five Forty Five and traffic sucks as usual. Reports are already confirming two major accidents. Including one SUV flipped over just off of the 405. Now this is kind of an interesting story. Check this out. Witnesses at the scene claim driver Mark Reynolds cut off three lanes of traffic in an attempt to get off at a passing exit.

The HONKING and CURSING outside grows to intense levels as Scarlett powers up her windows.

AVERY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Reynolds later told police that the reason he nearly killed a half dozen people and himself is because he was late for a movie at The Galleria. That's right. He actually told the police he was late for Tom Cruise.

SCARLETT
Oh my God.

Scarlett laughs. She's grown an instant liking to the talk show and grins as if she's made a friend.

AVERY (O.S.)
Some more wonderful news. We got another head on collision on I-10 causing a multiple car pile up.

CO-HOST (O.S.)
Good God. And the madness continues.

AVERY (O.S.)
It never stops.

CO-HOST (O.S.)
You said head on? As in two cars going opposite directions?

Scarlett shakes her head with disbelief.

AVERY (O.S.)
Yes. You heard me correctly.

CO-HOST (O.S.)
How exactly did that happen?

AVERY (O.S.)
I don't know but my guess is there was liquor involved. Just a guess.

SCARLETT
Yeah, no shit.

CO-HOST (O.S.)
I think that's a safe assumption.

Scarlett looks to the sky and spots a NEWS HELICOPTER hovering over the chaotic scene.

AVERY (O.S.)
 Anyways. Both drivers were just
 flown by helicopter to Cedars-Sinai
 Medical Center where they are
 reported to be in critical
 condition. Another four reported
 injuries at the scene and at least
 eight vehicles sustaining damages.

HONK-HONK!

Scarlett startled by the car horn. She turns to --

A MAN BEHIND THE WHEEL. Out of patience. Full of rage. He
 loses his cool and slaps his hand on the dash.

DRIVER
 Ya dumb bitch! Move it!

Scarlett's once chipper smile turns sour.

AVERY (O.S.)
 Boy, I'll tell you. For a place
 called The City Of Angels, we're
 having a serious lack of divine
 intervention here people!

She rubs her sore temples. Panic setting in.

AVERY (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Non stop traffic. Smog. Gangland
 shootings. Taxes. I guess all
 that's left is the inevitable
 earthquake that will mercifully
 swallow us whole.

CO-HOST (O.S.)
 Come on. You could never leave all
 this behind.

AVERY (O.S.)
 I'm telling you. If you ask me, it
 couldn't happen soon enough.

Enough is enough. Scarlett shuts off her stereo.

About thirty yards away, A TOW TRUCK hauls off what's left of
 the twisted wreckage.

Traffic breaks up.

Scarlett inches forward a bit as cars slowly pick up speed.
 She sighs in relief as the worst is over.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - DAY

The older building is currently under renovation and accented by an indecipherable mess of scaffolding, support beams and wooden planks. Behind this wall of construction is faded chipped paint and rows of cracked windows.

A familiar Camry rounds a corner and slows to a stop near the beaten down complex.

INT. CAMRY - DAY

Scarlett gives her new home a good once over. She pulls her car and trailer to the curb but fails to notice --

A PICK-UP TRUCK backing into the same spot.

HONK-HONK!

She stomps her brake.

PICK-UP DRIVER
(to Scarlett)
Hey! Wake up!

SCARLETT
Oh, crap!

INT. PICK UP TRUCK - DAY

Behind the wheel is JASON (20s) angry, steroid abuser, huge biceps. He stares at Scarlett's image staring back at him from her side-view mirror.

JASON
Can you believe this chick?
Probably on snapchat.

Sitting next to him is girlfriend BONNIE KEEBLER (20s) blonde dye-job, cute, a few extra pounds. She rolls her eyes at Jason's simple stupidity.

BONNIE
Don't make a scene, okay?

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - STREET CURB - DAY

An angry Jason steps from his truck, quickly heads for the front door of their complex. Bonnie trails behind with a bulky paper bag of groceries.

Jason unlocks the door and heads inside. He snags up a single brick from the lobby floor and wedges it between the open door and frame.

He grabs the elevator before it shuts.

Bonnie struggles to keep up.

BONNIE
(to Jason)
Yeah. Thanks for your help.

Bonnie stops at the door. She tries to balance her bag in one hand and open with the other. A loaf of bread falls to the sidewalk.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Seriously?

A sincere but embarrassed Scarlett picks up the bread, holds open the door for her new neighbor.

SCARLETT
I didn't see you guys. I'm sorry.

BONNIE
Don't mind Jason. It's not his fault. He's kind of stupid.

Bonnie motions to the U-Haul. Scarlett follows her look.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
You just moving in?

SCARLETT
Yeah. Good guess.

Scarlett extends her hand.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
Scarlett. Scarlett McTierney.

Bonnie accepts.

BONNIE
Bonnie Keebler. So. UCLA or bust?

SCARLETT
No, I'm an actress.

BONNIE
(smug)
Aren't we all.

Scarlett is distracted by something white melting at the bottom of Bonnie's bag.

SCARLETT

Oh --

Scarlett nods to Bonnie's pants.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

You're leaking.

BONNIE

Excuse me?

SCARLETT

Something in your bag. It's melting.

Bonnie looks to her wet jeans.

BONNIE

Shit. Forgot I had ice cream.

SCARLETT

I won't keep you. Just wanted to say Hi.

Bonnie stares back at the U-Haul.

BONNIE

You hauling a bunch of heavy furniture?

Scarlett glances back at it. A bit intimidated by the all too heavy load.

SCARLETT

Yeah. Actually. Could use an extra pair of hands truth be told.

Bonnie rolls her eyes at this cheap and painfully shameful plea for help. With Scarlett's back still turned, Bonnie snags the loaf of bread from her hands.

BONNIE

Tell you what. Let me put this away and meet you back here in five.

Scarlett is all grins. A real pleasant surprise.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment is old, white, and very basic. The cheapest place in a safe and respectable neighborhood.

Bonnie sprawled out on Scarlett's new couch. A tall cup of margarita in hand and it isn't her first.

Scarlett assembles her computer at a work desk. Plugging in various cables and cords. A cup of her own margarita sits before her cheap laser printer.

Stacks of unopened boxes blanket the white tile floor. A real mess that won't get put away tonight.

BONNIE

So I guess I got swept away by all the stories my Mom told me as a kid. She wanted to be an actress too. She was really good. Starred in all her school plays. She even did some modeling so the story goes.

Scarlett finishes at her desk, snags her drink and takes a seat on a swivel chair. She spins in Bonnie's direction and crosses her legs, one over the other.

SCARLETT

So what happened?

BONNIE

Her senior year she got pregnant with me by this older guy. This ass hole private drama coach who was gonna take her places. Introduce her to all the right people.

SCARLETT

I take it not so much?

BONNIE

By the time she told him she was late, he was a distant memory. Never heard from him again.

Scarlett winces.

SCARLETT

That's terrible.

BONNIE

Tada! Here I am. A walking cliché.

SCARLETT

This was your father.

BONNIE

So she drops out six months shy of graduation. After that, it was all about survival. Acting wasn't even a thought. Then one bad marriage followed another. Then another. That's three drunken, chain smoking bastards that I got to call Daddy.

SCARLETT

Sounds pretty awful.

BONNIE

That shit always broke my heart, ya know? The way she used to talk about the old days and what could've been.

Bonnie is on the verge of tears. Scarlett sees her pain and looks sad for her.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

In a way, I felt like I had a responsibility to finish what she started.

SCARLETT

So you making it in the business would be like her making it.

BONNIE

Yeah. Sort of. Pretty corny, right?

Scarlett thinks it over. A growing smile.

SCARLETT

No. That's great. I think that's awesome.

BONNIE

Except here I am. Stuck in a bad relationship with an abusive alcoholic.

Bonnie puts the cup to her mouth.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

The irony.

Down the hatch.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Suddenly I could use another drink.

Bonnie sits up too fast as the cup and what's left of her drink spills to the brand new throw carpet.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Fuck! I'm her twenty fucking minutes and I've already ruined your fucking carpet!

SCARLETT

No big deal. It was bound to happen anyway.

She grabs hers and Bonnie's cup and heads to the kitchen.

BONNIE

Okay, I've spilled my guts. Not to mention my drink. So how about you?

Scarlett pours them another tall one.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

What's your story?

SCARLETT

Nothing quite that interesting. I'm sorry to say.

BONNIE

White picket fence. Nice big family. A boyfriend who'd walk over hot coals if you asked him. None of whom exactly embraced the idea of you picking up and leaving. Am I right?

Scarlett returns with their drinks. She hands one off to Bonnie and grabs a tub of popcorn.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Must've taken something pretty big to leave all that behind.

Scarlett fights a smile. An excited look on her face.

SCARLETT

I got a part in a horror movie.

BONNIE

A supporting?

SCARLETT

The lead.

Scarlett gleefully chomps a big handful of popcorn. All smiles. Bonnie not so much.

BONNIE

Fuck you.

Scarlett, a bit shocked, throws popcorn on her.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

I mean...

(beat)

Congratulations.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - SIDEWALK - DAY

Scarlett finishes a long jog and stops just near the front lobby of her building. Out of breath. Pushing herself to the very limit.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - LOBBY - DAY

Scarlett walks to her mailbox, unlocks BOX #132 and pulls out a stack of bills and junk mail.

She finds a letter from SHELLEY KEEBLER, 501 N. CACTUS WAY, PHOENIX, AZ to BONNIE KEEBLER, 1449 BARRINGTON AVENUE, APT. 132, LOS ANGELES, CA 90025.

A nearby elevator DINGS and opens. A YOUNG COUPLE step off and head for the garage. Scarlett hurries in before the metal door shuts in her face.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

Scarlett stops at APARTMENT 232. Bonnie's place. She's got her mother's letter in hand and about to give a knock when she hears a commotion coming from inside.

JASON (O.S.)

Don't walk away from me! I'm still talking to you!

Scarlett puts an ear to the door.

BONNIE (O.S.)
I'm sick of this! We're just
friends! When are you gonna get
that through your thick skull?!

BANG! A fist on the door startles Scarlett. She bolts off.

INT. THUNDER CAT ENTERTAINMENT - CASTING OFFICE - DAY

A cute young SECRETARY with a revealing top and hot red lipstick plays solitaire, surfs Instagram, and blows giant bubbles all at the same time.

Next to her desk sits a cheap folding table with pink sign-in sheets, stacks of release forms and script sides from the upcoming movie "Disco Vampire Sluts".

An absolutely livid ACTRESS comes storming out of a back room office in a tight skirt and high heels.

ACTRESS
Bunch of bullshit!

She bumps elbows with Scarlett on her way out the door.

Scarlett watches as she dips in an old freight elevator across the hall.

They stare each other down.

ACTRESS (CONT'D)
(to Scarlett)
What are you looking at?!

The elevator door shuts. Scarlett heads inside.

She spots a whole waiting room full of similar young hotties all dressed to kill and checking their makeup in compact mirrors and cell phone cameras.

SECRETARY
May I help you?

SCARLETT
It depends. Is this Thunder Cat
Entertainment?

SECRETARY
Yes. Lucky guess.

SCARLETT

I'm Scarlett McTierney. I have an appointment with Tony Bell.

The Secretary snags up a sign-in sheet and release form from the table. She hands them and a pen and clipboard to a very confused Scarlett.

SECRETARY

Sign in here and fill out one of these.

SCARLETT

Oh no. I actually have an appointment with Mister Bell. He's expecting me.

The Secretary cracks a smug grin.

SECRETARY

Of course he is. And what's this pertaining to?

SCARLETT

It's concerning Dark Side Of The Moon. We talked two weeks ago.

SECRETARY

(confused)
Dark Side Of The Moon?

No clue at all. Scarlett can hardly believe it.

A DELIVERY BOY heads for the door with a stack of packaging envelopes and boxes. This is CHRIS RESNIK (20s), shaggy blonde, scruffy beard.

He gives Scarlett a quick up and down. She also checks him out but is much less obvious.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

Hey, Chris. What's Dark Side Of The Moon?

CHRIS

Oh! Dark Side Of The Moon!

Scarlett smiles. Chris thinks it over.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I don't know. Sorry.

He continues out. Scarlett loses her smile. Now growing visibly annoyed by it all.

SCARLETT
It's for the part of Kaitlin. The vampire hunter.

SECRETARY
(smiles)
Oh, okay. You're talking about Disco Vampire Sluts.

SCARLETT
Excuse me?

SECRETARY
Yeah, there's been a couple minor rewrites. It's basically the same story. There's still, like, vampires and stuff.

ACTRESS #2 sprints for the door.

ACTRESS #2
Fucking asshole!

She pushes Scarlett aside and runs out.

SECRETARY
Another satisfied customer.

Scarlett now fresh out of patience.

SCARLETT
Can you just let Tony know I'm here, please?

INT. TONY BELL'S OFFICE - DAY

TONY BELL (30s), greasy and shifty looking, paces the carpet and talks on the phone with a business associate. From his slicked back hair to his gold cuff links, he's all about the game and nothing else.

TONY
I know what I said and I don't care what I promised. What are we, in third grade here? I pinky swear with sugar on top we're gonna do your shit script.
(listens)
Well he should've got it in writing then. I never promised him ten percent of the budget. We don't have a budget. So how does that work?

He smiles back at Scarlett, waiting at his desk. She returns his smile but her discomfort is palpable.

She glances around the room at several framed movie posters hanging proudly on the walls. All Thunder Cat productions and all involving scantily clad women, vampires, werewolves or a combination of all three.

TONY (CONT'D)

I already gave your boy two gees on a handout because you insisted he could deliver me a winner. This kid can barely deliver a sandwich without forgetting the bread.

(listens)

I never said that. I never said that and I don't care what he says I said. He's full of shit.

Tony faces Scarlett who is close to leaving for good.

TONY (CONT'D)

Look, I gotta go. Business.

(listens)

Yeah. Love you too. I'll see you guys at Sunday dinner.

Tony hangs up.

TONY (CONT'D)

So you're Sarah from Oklahoma.

SCARLETT

Texas. And it's Scarlett.

TONY

Yeah, right. I hear good things.

SCARLETT

Thank you.

TONY

And you read for what part again?

SCARLETT

Kaitlin.

Tony is lost. Not a clue.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

The Vampire Hunter.

Still lost.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
She's the lead.

Tony smiles.

TONY
Of course. Kaitlin.

He grabs a dish of candy and offers it to Scarlett.

TONY (CONT'D)
Gum drop?

Scarlett smiles and grabs a small handful. Tony slumps down in his Italian leather chair and watches Scarlett as he rocks back and forth in silence.

Scarlett totally creeped out. She chews her gum drops and stares at the carpet.

TONY (CONT'D)
So. Tell me. How long are you in town for?

SCARLETT
For good. I just moved here. From Texas.

TONY
I see. Well then. That's rather unfortunate.

Scarlett grows worried. She sits up straight. At full attention now.

SCARLETT
I'm sorry?

TONY
Yeah. I don't know how to tell you this, Sarah.

SCARLETT
Scarlett.

Tony walks to Scarlett. He rests his butt on the edge of his desk and looms over her with a real creepy demeanor. Scarlett uneasy by it all.

TONY
Last week we ran into a bit of a snag with one of our investors.
(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)

He dropped out last minute due to an...unforeseen circumstance with the IRS. But we were lucky to find a new investor. Phil Simms. He's putting up half our budget plus another fifty grand.

Scarlett nods but still lost by it all.

SCARLETT

Okay? And?

TONY

Well, he's insisting we go with his niece for Kaitlin.

SCARLETT

I don't understand. Justin told me the part was mine.

Tony rests his hand on Scarlett's shoulder. His eyes and face full of fake compassion.

TONY

I know how surprised and angry you must be. Quite frankly, I don't know why Justin never told you. He's known about this for over a week now.

Scarlett chokes back her tears.

SCARLETT

I don't believe this.

TONY

That's something, Sarah. You came all the way out here for us. Your dedication is something. You know, I don't just do this for everyone. But for you, I'm gonna make the exception.

Tony strokes her cheek with his fingers. A lustful look in his untrustworthy eyes. Scarlett ready to bite his hand off any second now.

TONY (CONT'D)

Why don't you and me...and Justin and Phil...we all go out tonight. See what we can work out. I hate to see you leave here empty handed. Maybe he can be persuaded to change his mind. But I gotta warn you.

(MORE)

TONY (CONT'D)
Phil's pretty stubborn. He's gonna
need lots of persuading.

Scarlett fights the urge to slug him. She's boiling over
now. Half tears. Half pent up rage.

SCARLETT
I...I can't. I have family in
town. We're having dinner.

Tony smiles.

TONY
I see. Well. That is unfortunate.
I hear you're very talented. In
case you change your mind...

He hands her his business card.

TONY (CONT'D)
Just give us a call.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - FIRST FLOOR - NIGHT

Scarlett steps off the elevator and digs in her purse for her
keys as she begins down the hallway. She hears crying and
looks up to find --

BONNIE squatting on the ground next to her door. Her face is
red and her left eye is a shiny bright purple.

BONNIE
He found out I went to see my ex.
He threw me out. Face first as you
can see.

Scarlett huffs with exhaustion as she's had a rough day
herself. She pops a squat next to Bonnie.

SCARLETT
Does it hurt?

BONNIE
No, it feels wonderful.

SCARLETT
You wanna talk about it?

BONNIE
Not really.

SCARLETT
Okay.

BONNIE

So my ex called me the other day
and asked how I was doing.

Scarlett grins and nods. I thought so.

SCARLETT

Okay. Go on.

BONNIE

I told him not so great. Pretty
shitty actually. So he asked me to
lunch to talk about it.

SCARLETT

Jason followed you?

BONNIE

I told my ex I was thinking about
moving back home with my Mom for
awhile. So he gave me a few bucks.
Two hundred dollars. So I come
home and the asshole starts digging
in my purse. Like he knew or
something.

SCARLETT

He found the money?

BONNIE

He asked me where I got it and I
told him none of your business. As
you can see, that didn't go over
well.

SCARLETT

You wanna stay with me?

Bonnie looks at Scarlett. A pleasant surprise. Scarlett
instantly regretting her offer.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

(clarifies)

Just for tonight.

BONNIE

Yeah, that would be great. Thanks.

Bonnie smiles.

SCARLETT

Oh --

Scarlett digs in her purse.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
Almost forgot.

She pulls out the letter from Bonnie's mother.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
I got this in my mailbox by
mistake. I'm One Thirty Two.
Guess she got our numbers mixed up.

BONNIE
Yeah, I've been waiting for this.
It's a check from my Mom. She's
been helping me out a little. It's
bad enough just making rent without
Jason looking over my shoulder.

Bonnie watches Scarlett. A bit hesitant.

SCARLETT
What is it?

BONNIE
I sort of gave my Mom your mailbox
number. I didn't want Jason to
find it.

Scarlett is a bit put off by this news.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
If I had a car, I'd go rent out a
mailbox but I don't so --

SCARLETT
It's okay. Really.

Bonnie smiles in relief.

BONNIE
So enough about me. How did that
meeting with your producer go?

Scarlett scoffs. Embarrassed but mostly angry.

SCARLETT
You know, I think me and you should
get a couple drinks.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - STAIRCASE - NIGHT

A completely blasted Scarlett has her arm around an even
drunker Bonnie as they stumble up some stairs.

BONNIE

Oh God. I'm gonna be sick.

Bonnie heads for the railing overlooking the alley below.
Pukes her guts out as --

Scarlett squats on a step.

Bonnie wipes her mouth, leans on the rail.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

What are we gonna do, Scarlett? I
don't know if you noticed, but are
lives are shit.

Scarlett hunches over, elbows on her knees. All crapped out
and just as sad.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Like worse than shit. Like shit
stuck to the bottom of a shoe.

SCARLETT

Guess I'll worry about that
tomorrow.

BONNIE

Tomorrow we'll both have hangovers.

SCARLETT

Then I'll worry about it later.

BONNIE

Are you gonna see about getting out
of your lease?

SCARLETT

Just think of what my parents would
say if I came running back after a
couple of days.

BONNIE

They'd probably say I told you so.

Scarlett is strangely quiet. Lost in her own world.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

What are you thinking?

SCARLETT

Remember that boyfriend who'd walk
over hot coals for me?

BONNIE

Yeah.

SCARLETT

Well he's a little busy right now
hooking up with my best friend.

Bonnie looks shocked. She walks to Scarlett, takes a seat on the step above her.

BONNIE

Let me guess. He didn't take to
the idea of you leaving him high
and dry back in Texas.

SCARLETT

I can't expect everyone to
just...take me back in with open
arms. Not after leaving so
quickly. I got that call and it
took me all of two seconds to
decide to drop everything and head
west.

BONNIE

You were excited. Just like anyone
would be.

SCARLETT

It wouldn't be fair to them to just
come back like nothing happened.

Bonnie rubs Scarlett's shoulders.

BONNIE

Look. I know you're scared. This
can be a scary place. But you have
to try. Don't quit like I did.

Scarlett isn't so sure. She just stares down the steps
wallowing in self pity and uncertainty.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Bonnie passed out on the couch. Scarlett drapes a homemade
blanket over her unconscious new friend.

She smiles down at her on her way to the kitchen. She grabs
a bottled water from the fridge just as --

RAP!-RAP-RAP! SOMEONE KNOCKS ON THE DOOR. The bottle drops
from Scarlett's hands and rolls across the tile.

Scarlett grabs her beating chest. Momentarily frazzled.
She heads to the peephole and checks the outer hall.

SCARLETT'S POV:

No one there. A blank brick wall.

BACK TO SCENE

Scarlett turns to Bonnie still passed out on the couch. Not bothered by the loud knocks.

She unlocks and pokes her head out.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Scarlett checks both ends of the hall. No sign of anyone in either direction. To her left and about fifteen feet away from her apartment sits --

THE STAIRWELL DOOR propped open by a cinder block.

THE SHADOW OF SOMEONE on the surface. Standing just out of view. As if waiting and hiding.

Scarlett spots the shadow and is instantly petrified.

THE SHADOW PERSON doesn't flinch. Unwavering.

SCARLETT

Jason?

THE SHADOW moves out of view. The loud and reverberating ECHO OF SOMEONE WALKING DOWN THE METAL STEPS.

Scarlett is so creeped out, she jumps back inside and locks and bolts the door.

EXT. DON'S FOOD MART - PARKING LOT - DAY

The lot is busy. Almost full of cars. A few STOCKMEN in orange vests collect empty carts.

ON THE FRONT WINDOW is a YELLOW CASHIERS WANTED FLYER.

Scarlett in the reflection. She reads the flyer.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - CUSTOMER SERVICE DESK - DAY

SAMANTHA "SAM" REDFIELD (30s), heavy set, overworked, staples paperwork, talks on the phone and does a return for an IRATE CUSTOMER all at the same time.

Scarlett steps up to the counter. She watches the young multi-tasker going a mile a minute.

SAM

(into the phone)

I don't know what to tell you, honey. You gotta work the shifts he schedules you. He changes your schedule, he's gotta change everyone's. You're not the only woman that works here ya know.

Sam spots Scarlett staring at her, gives her the stink-eye and quickly turns her back.

Scarlett steps back a bit, gives Sam some space. She turns her attention to the busy checkout lanes.

There are only TWO CASHIERS and two open registers out of twelve available lanes. The lines are ridiculous and borderline unacceptable.

ANGRY CUSTOMER

Let's go!

ANGRY CUSTOMER #2

Come on up there!

Scarlett smiles, shakes her head. Meanwhile --

Sam is busy filing her nails. Still on the phone.

SAM

Look. Everyone's freaking out. You think you're a special case?
(listens)
Fine. Bring your mother in. I'll tell her the same thing I just told you. If you don't like it, quit.

She hangs up, faces Scarlett.

SAM (CONT'D)

Yes?

SCARLETT

Can I get an application?

Sam smirks back at Scarlett. A look of disbelief.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
Is there a problem?

SAM
No. No problem.

Sam snags up an application and pen from under the desk.

SAM (CONT'D)
You here about the cashier's
position?

SCARLETT
Yes.

SAM
Great. You're hired.

Scarlett is baffled. Before she can utter the first word --
Sam has the paperwork out and ready.

SAM (CONT'D)
Just take aisle five all the way to
the back, go through the swinging
doors and follow the directions to
the lounge. I'll have Brad meet
you down there as soon as he can.

Scarlett stares at the paperwork. At a loss for words.

Through the front doors, coming up behind Scarlett is grocery
stockman and local pretty face CHRIS RESNIK. The part-time
delivery boy from Thunder Cat Productions.

Scarlett surprised to see him. And him a bit ashamed as he's
looking particularly shaggy and unshaven. The elastic straps
of his back brace drag clumsily on his jeans.

SAM (CONT'D)
Well if it isn't Captain
Punctuality. Deciding to grace us
with his presence.

Scarlett smiles back at him. Chris blushes. All smiles and
totally embarrassed.

SAM (CONT'D)
And you're only twenty minutes late
today. You must be buckin for a
promotion, buddy.

Chris pops what's left of his frozen burrito and flips her a quick bird on his way to receiving.

SAM (CONT'D)

Yeah, I know I'm number one.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - FIRST FLOOR STOCKROOM - DAY

Chris swings open the double doors. Heads for a timeclock hanging on the wall. He swipes his ID badge, clocking in for his shift.

Taped above the timeclock is --

A MISSING PERSONS BULLETIN featuring a beautiful young Latina with the name GRACIELLA LUCIA SANCHEZ.

Chris takes a moment to gaze at her picture. She sure is something to look at.

He heads for the stairs.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS STOCKROOM - RECEIVING AREA - DAY

Chris rushes into the room in a panic. He desperately attempts to pin his nametag on his t shirt and pull himself together. He spots his buddy --

MANNY (20s), short, Latino, stumbling toward him with a scanner and clipboard in hand. He's furious.

MANNY

Chris, what the fuck, bro?!

CHRIS

What's the truck doing here so early?

MANNY

Never mind the truck. I called you a hundred times last night. You were supposed to be here, bro.

Another STOCKMAN almost runs them both over with an electric jack pulling a six hundred pound load.

Chris and Manny step aside. Out of the line of fire.

CHRIS

Refresh my memory.

MANNY

You missed inventory. I thought
old Bradster was gonna shit a
Buick.

Chris rubs his weary face. He could kick himself.

MANNY (CONT'D)

The whole store was here but you.

CHRIS

I thought it was next week.

MANNY

Well it wasn't. It was last night
and you weren't here, bro.

Chris tosses up his hands in surrender.

MANNY (CONT'D)

Brad's pulling pallets to the
floor. He thought you were gonna
be another no show. So did I.

CHRIS

Sorry, brother. I screwed up.
What do you want me to do? I'll do
it. Whatever, man.

MANNY

After you're done kissing Brad's
ass for your job, you can finish
unloading this truck.

He hands Chris the scanner and freight invoice on his way to
the employee lounge. About halfway down the hall he stops
and turns --

MANNY (CONT'D)

One more thing, holmes. This
friendship is officially on
suspension.

He heads out.

CHRIS

Manny, come on, bro. Come back
here and give me a kiss.

MANNY

Kiss my ass!

Manny ducks out the door.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Chris gives a knock before entering.

Leaning on his desk, sleeves rolled up, arms folded is store manager BRAD ACKERMAN (40s), doughy and pale from working long hours and even later nights.

BRAD

Have a seat, Chris.

Chris turns to a thin and sickly looking man with salt and pepper hair, a bright red nose and a sport coat out of style by a good thirty years.

This is DETECTIVE DALE "COZ" COSWELL (50s). Coswell snaps a piece of gum and eyeballs Chris.

Chris doesn't like him. He returns Coswell's ugly stare and takes a seat before Brad.

CHRIS

You wanted to see me, Brad?

BRAD

You wanna tell me where you were last night? We tried calling you for over an hour. Your phone was off.

CHRIS

I guess I got the dates mixed up. I'm sorry. What can I say?

BRAD

Not exactly the symbol of punctuality this week, are you, Chris? Late three times. One hour on Tuesday, thirty minutes on Wednesday. Another forty five on Monday. That doesn't count, of course, the seven straight days you left early.

Chris looks down in shame. Coswell watches him like a hawk locking in on his prey.

BRAD (CONT'D)

I could fire you, Chris, but I'm afraid you wouldn't care. So I'm not gonna make it that easy.

CHRIS

What's that mean?

BRAD

Your mind hasn't been on your work lately. Any particular reason?

CHRIS

I stock shelves, Brad. My mind's never been on my work.

BRAD

You sure there's nothing on your mind? Nothing you need to tell us?

CHRIS

This isn't about my less than stellar attendance record, is it? This is about Lucia.

Brad and Coswell share a look that speaks louder than words. Chris notices.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What do you want me to do, Brad? You want me to confess? Tell you I cut off her head and stuck it in my freezer?

BRAD

Nobody's accusing you of anything, Chris. Detective Coswell just has some questions for you. Some things that need cleared up.

CHRIS

(to Coswell)

Look. Officer.

COSWELL

Detective Coswell.

CHRIS

Detective Coswell. Sir. I can't tell you anything you probably don't already have written down on your little notepad there. Of which I'm sure there are lots of interesting tales of my so-called obsession with Lucia.

Coswell shoots Brad another glance. Chris notices the exchange and grows even more upset.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Stop doing that. With the staring. What is that?

BRAD

Just take it easy, Chris.

CHRIS

No. What is this? Everybody knows things didn't work out well between me and Lucia. I wiped my tears and moved on. No big deal. I'm not obsessed.

Coswell refers to his notepad.

COSWELL

(reads)

She's the most perfect bitch I've ever seen. Just look at that rack. That round, fat ass. If I don't tap that soon I'm gonna kill somebody.

(to Chris)

I don't know, Chris. Sounds like a man obsessed to me.

CHRIS

Okay. Sure. There were plenty of things I wanted to do to Lucia's body. That's no secret. Chopping it into little pieces isn't one of them.

BRAD

(furious)

Why don't you watch your fucking mouth about her!

Coswell and Chris are both shocked by Brad's outburst. An awkward moment of silence.

CHRIS

You're right, Brad. Sorry.

(to Coswell)

Can I go now?

Coswell isn't so sure. He stares back at Brad still fuming hot and ready to choke Chris out.

COSWELL

Thanks for coming in, Chris. We'll keep you posted.

Chris and Brad lock eyes. A real staring contest.

CHRIS

Yeah. No problem.

Chris ducks out.

Coswell clicks his pen and snaps his gum. As if this is his usual daily routine. Brad watches him.

BRAD
What're you thinking?

COSWELL
Did Sanchez ever make a formal
complain about this kid?

BRAD
Not officially. No. But he did
call out the night of Graciella's
abduction.

COSWELL
And?

BRAD
And. He lives three blocks from
the store and he's the only one
without a solid alibi.

Coswell sighs and pops his gum.

COSWELL
Well okay then.

INT. EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - DAY

Chris struts in with a dollar bill in hand. He slides it in the slot of a soda machine. He turns and spots --

Scarlett at a table in the corner. She is filling out paperwork and couldn't be less enthused.

CHRIS
You look about as excited to be
here as I am.

Chris snags an orange soda from the machine and cracks it open. He takes a generous swig.

SCARLETT
Not exactly why I moved out here.

CHRIS
Yeah. Me neither.

SCARLETT
You know, your boss is an asshole.

CHRIS

Yeah. Sorry about that. Welcome to LA.

Scarlett rolls her eyes. She returns to her paperwork.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So you're actually applying for a job here?

SCARLETT

Yeah. Why's that so crazy?

Chris stalls. Fights a grin.

CHRIS

Nothing. No reason.

He chugs his soda.

Scarlett's interest piqued but she lets it go.

SCARLETT

That woman at the desk is very...
(beat)
Interesting.

CHRIS

Who? Sam? She's okay. Don't let her furry lip scare you. Inside she's as warm as apple pie.

SCARLETT

She doesn't seem to like you.

CHRIS

Yeah, that's just a thing we do. She's just playing hard to get.

SCARLETT

You gonna put a ring on it?

CHRIS

I don't know. I don't think they make rings that big, do they?

Scarlett laughs. Brad dips his head in. He spots Chris spitting his usual rap to the new girl.

BRAD

Chris, you're not gonna get any work done in here. You still have twenty five pallets downstairs. I suggest you get to it.

CHRIS
 (to Scarlett)
 Anyways. I guess I'll be seeing
 you around.

SCARLETT
 Yeah. I guess so.

Chris heads for the door. Brad gives him the stink eye as
 Chris nudges past him.

BRAD
 (to Scarlett)
 Charlotte. When you're done you
 can meet me in the front office.

SCARLETT
 Okay. Thanks. And it's Scarlett.

BRAD
 Yeah. Right.

Brad watches her with concern. He cracks a lukewarm smile
 and heads out. Scarlett looks confused by it all.

SCARLETT
 Yeah. Nice to meet you too.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - GARAGE - MORNING

Scarlett steps through the lobby door and into the dark and
 dimly lit parking garage. She sports a ponytail, an orange
 Don's Food Mart vest and pink back pack.

She stops at her Camry and unlocks.

INT. CAMRY - MORNING

Scarlett tosses her back pack aside and plops herself down.
 She puts the key in, cranks it over. The engine coughs a
 bit, dares to start but never gets there.

SCARLETT
 Come on. Not today, God.

Scarlett tries again. It once again coughs and grows weaker
 with the slow drain of the battery.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
 Sonofabitch! Fuck!

Scarlett has an all out meltdown and punches her fists on the steering column and dash.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - CHECKOUT LANES - DAY

Scarlett behind the register checking out a CUSTOMER. She hands the woman her receipt.

SCARLETT

Thank you. Have a nice day.

She slides a credit slip into the register. One lane over, a CASHIER rings up frozen food man NATHAN "NATE" GARCIA in his usual blue wool cap and sweatshirt.

Nate is strong and good-looking but something is sinister and dark about his eyes. He throws a glance in Scarlett's direction as she quickly looks down.

Chris drops a soda and bag of chips on the belt.

CHRIS

You got a thing for criminals?

Scarlett fights a smile as she rings his lunch.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I'm surprised he actually paid for his lunch today.

SCARLETT

You jealous?

CHRIS

Don't mean to burst your bubble but Nate and I have a history. Some things that have nothing to do with you.

Scarlett gives him a coy smile.

SCARLETT

Whatever. Three seventy six please.

Chris grins back at her, swipes his debit card.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD SIDEWALK - DAY

Scarlett strolls along the walkway, back pack slung over her shoulder, all crapped out.

Chris's car creeps up the street next to her.

CHRIS

Hey!

Scarlett spots him behind the wheel. She slows but never comes to a complete stop.

Chris cruises along with her.

SCARLETT

You following me?

CHRIS

Where's your car?

SCARLETT

In my garage. Dead. There's cars behind you, ya know?

HONK-HONK!

The driver behind Chris loses patience and passes.

CHRIS

Where you headed?

SCARLETT

About two blocks.

CHRIS

Come on. Get in.

Scarlett huffs with disinterest.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What're you doing? Come on.

She lazily moves for his car, crawls in. A few more cars line up behind them.

HONK-HONK! They drive off.

INT. CHRIS'S CAR - DAY

Chris stares back and forth between the road and Scarlett. She is unusually quiet. Too tired to care.

CHRIS

So you passed up a lead in a feature film because the producer wanted to play doctor.

Scarlett not in the mood as she stares out her window.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

When every other actress in town would've spread eagle you took the high road and told him to fuck himself.

Scarlett smiles, shakes her head.

SCARLETT

God. This really is a small town, isn't it?

CHRIS

Cynthia told me all about it. Another one of our starving actresses at Don's.

SCARLETT

Yeah. Well. It was a shit film anyways.

CHRIS

It's still better than ringing a register.

SCARLETT

How can you work for that asshole?

CHRIS

It's not that bad. It has its upsides.

SCARLETT

You mean like taking advantage of desperate, half naked girls looking for a way in?

Chris grins.

CHRIS

You think you know me. Truth is, I'm just another starving artist like you. Like every other fuckin person in LA. Chasing the dream.

SCARLETT

You an actor?

CHRIS

Writer. Screenplays mostly. Low budget type shit.

SCARLETT
You mean like Disco Vampire Sluts?

Chris grins.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
I noticed a name was missing from
the title page. Yours by any
chance?

CHRIS
You laugh. But everyone's gotta
start somewhere. That's the kind
of crap everyone's shooting. It's
cheap. It's quick. And horror
turns the quickest profit.

SCARLETT
It's pretty sad if you ask me.

CHRIS
You can't be too choosy out here.
Next thing you know, you lose sight
of what you want and you're two
years into Don's Food Mart.
Everything you used to love about
LA, you start hating.

SCARLETT
Gotta be honest. Not so crazy
about it so far.

CHRIS
Don't worry. It only gets worse.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - DAY

Chris pulls his car to the curb in front of the complex.
They sit a moment with the engine running.

INT. CHRIS'S CAR - DAY

Scarlett snags her back pack, opens the door, about to step
out when Chris grips her forearm.

CHRIS
Wait a second.

Scarlett looks back.

SCARLETT
What is it?

CHRIS

When exactly are you getting your car fixed?

SCARLETT

When I can afford it. I don't know. At least not for a couple weeks. Why?

CHRIS

You probably shouldn't make a habit of walking to work by yourself.

Scarlett squints, confused.

SCARLETT

Okay. Why not?

CHRIS

A couple weeks back a woman was picked up in broad daylight. Just a couple blocks from here.

Scarlett isn't buying it.

SCARLETT

Seriously?

CHRIS

Don't let the nice neighborhood fool you. These girls jog around in their tank tops and asses hanging out like no one can touch them. A place like that's a breeding ground for creeps and assholes.

Scarlett stares down at Chris's hand still on her arm and squeezing her tight.

SCARLETT

You mean like guys who put their hands all over females without asking?

Chris follows her look and lets her go.

CHRIS

Sorry. Just thought you should know. That's all.

Scarlett grins.

SCARLETT

Is this some kind of cheap plea to get into my apartment?

CHRIS

Seriously. You might wanna get your car looked at soon. Just saying.

Scarlett loses her sly grin. A look of sheer terror comes over her.

SCARLETT

Okay. Thanks for the heads up.

Chris reaches for his wallet, pulls out a business card with his name and number.

CHRIS

Here's my number. In case you need a ride to work or something. Just in case your car's still out of commission.

Scarlett snags it up. Takes a look.

SCARLETT

Wow. You gotta business card and everything.

CHRIS

Welcome to LA.

Scarlett dips out and shuts the door. Chris watches her closely as she heads for the lobby door. He checks both ends of the street, cautious and on the lookout.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Scarlett sits at her computer, browsing the internet for possible acting gigs. She runs across a few ads:

INSERT - WEBPAGE

LOOKING FOR UNSIGNED ACTORS AND ACTRESSES. ON-CAMERA TALENT FOR TV PROMO. FEMALE MODELS FOR FEATURE HORROR FILM.

She DOUBLE CLICKS on FEMALE MODELS FOR FEATURE HORROR FILM.

Thunder Cat Entertainment presents DISCO VAMPIRE SLUTS. Now searching for female models 18-25. Must be attractive with a great body.

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!!! Must be willing to follow directions (and show some skin).

For directions please contact Tony Bell at 310-360-3045.

BACK TO SCENE

Scarlett grows tired and shuts off her monitor. She rubs her weary, strained eyes.

LATER THAT NIGHT

Scarlett is sprawled out on her couch watching the climactic chase scene of a cheap horror film.

Her SMART PHONE rested on a table before her.

She slowly drifts off. Her trembling eyelids suggest a busy mind going a thousand miles per hour.

Her eyes grow heavy. In a deep sleep now.

A WALL CLOCK reads 11:59 PM.

Scarlett snores softly. And then --

Her SMART PHONE RINGS. On the surface: "UNKNOWN CALLER"

Scarlett sits up, snags her phone and answers:

SCARLETT

I forgot to call you back. Sorry.

No answer from the other end. Silence.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Hello?

Nothing. Scarlett hangs up. Speed dials Bonnie.

BONNIE (V.O.)

Hey.

SCARLETT

Did you just call me?

BONNIE (V.O.)

Not really. Not unless I butt dialed you.

SCARLETT

Sorry. Go back to sleep. I'll talk to you tomorrow.

BONNIE (V.O.)
Nite nite.

Scarlett hangs up. She lays back down.

The PHONE RINGS AGAIN: "UNKNOWN CALLER"

SCARLETT
Fucking kidding me.

She snags it up.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
Hello?

SONG (V.O.)
Shoo-wap, shoo-wah. Shoo-wap,
shoo-wah. Shoo-wap, shoo-wah.
Shoo-wap, shoo-waah-ahh!

Scarlett laughs. A bit taken back.

SCARLETT
What the shit is this?

SONG (V.O.)
In The Still...Of The Night...I
held you...Held you tight...Cause I
love...Love you so...Promise I'll
never...Let you go...In The Still
Of The Night...
(background)
In The Still Of The Night...

SCARLETT
Chris? Who the hell is this? It's
late and I'm working in the
morning.

SONG (V.O.)
I remember...That night in
May...The stars...Were bright...Up
above...
(background vocals)
I remember...

The caller hangs up, abruptly ending the song. Scarlett, now thoroughly disgusted, tosses her phone aside.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Scarlett passed out in her own bed. A television is on but the volume is turned down.

AN ALARM CLOCK reads 1:34 AM.

She rolls over, faces the open door.

The sound of her SMART PHONE RINGING from the living room awakens an unamused Scarlett.

She checks the clock. 1:35 AM.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Scarlett rushes in, leans over her couch and snags the ringing phone from the cushions.

"UNKNOWN CALLER"

Scarlett answers:

SCARLETT

Hello?

SONG (V.O.)

Well before...The light...Hold me
again...With all of your might...In
The Still Of The Night...

(background vocals)

In The Still Of The Night.

SCARLETT

Who is this???

SONG (V.O.)

Shoo-wap, shoo-wah. Shoo-wap,
shoo-wah...

Scarlett hangs up.

SCARLETT

Leave me alone.

Her nerves totally frazzled now.

A SINGLE LOUD BANG on the front door.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Shit!

The phone drops and slides under the couch.

Scarlett grabs her chest -- now beating out of control.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

Unable to catch her breath.

THE SHADOW OF SOMEONE just under the crack of the door.

Scarlett bends down, frantically searches for her phone. It is under the couch and out of reach.

The front door CRACKS OPEN. Unlocked.

Scarlett, panicked, hides herself behind the couch.

A BRIGHT WHITE LIGHT from the hallway creeps into the apartment like a laser beam.

No one on the other side. Just an empty outer hallway and the solid brick of the opposite wall.

Scarlett turns her attention to AN ALUMINUM BASEBALL BAT leaned against the wall by the door.

She ever so carefully crawls toward it.

She snags it up, stands and hides.

After a few moments, she cracks open the door a bit more and peeks her head into the hall.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - LATE NIGHT

Scarlett plants one leg outside and the other safely indoors. She is ready to take someone's head off.

SCARLETT

The cops are on their way so you
better get out of here!

She turns her attention to the STAIRWELL DOOR once again propped open by the cinder block. And once again --

THE SHADOW OF SOMEONE WAITING.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

There he is, Officer!

The SHADOW PERSON runs down the stairs.

Scarlett follows with the baseball bat.

INT. STAIRWELL - LATE NIGHT

Scarlett leans over the top rail and looks down. She spots someone running for the bottom of the steps. They are fast and out of sight in seconds.

THE BASEMENT DOOR SWINGS OPEN AND CRASHES CLOSED. The deep and heavy ECHO radiates through the stairwell.

SCARLETT

(screams)

What do you want from me???

Scarlett slowly composes herself and heads back.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

Scarlett pushes her couch aside and spots her phone rested on the white tile. She grabs it and dials 911.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)

911. What's your emergency?

SCARLETT

Someone just broke into my apartment.

A CAR SQUEALS ITS TIRES in the rear alley. Scarlett races into her bedroom.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)

What is your address?

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Scarlett rushes to her bedroom window overlooking the back alley and peeks through some cheap venetian blinds.

911 OPERATOR (V.O.)

Hello? Are you there?

SCARLETT'S POV:

A DARK COLORED FOUR DOOR drives like a bat out of hell up the alley and around a bend. Out of sight.

SCARLETT

Yes, I'm here! Just send somebody!

INT. STAIRWELL BASEMENT - LATE NIGHT

OFFICER DANNY GRECCO (30s), youthful, handsome, holds open the battered basement door painted in graffiti. He spots a single brick on the outside grass and picks it up.

He ducks his head back inside.

OFFICER GRECCO
Hey, partner!

Scarlett and OFFICER KEITH WINANS (50s), black, veteran cop, lean over the first floor railing.

OFFICER WINANS
Yeah, what is it?

Officer Grecco walks up a few steps, stops halfway and stares up at Scarlett and his partner.

OFFICER GRECCO
Found a brick outside. Looks like the tenants have been using it to prop open the back door. Anyone off the street could've walked in here.

Scarlett rolls her eyes, shakes her head.

OFFICER WINANS
(to Scarlett)
Did you know about this?

SCARLETT
No. I didn't even know there was a back door.

OFFICER WINANS
Might wanna talk to your landlord about that.

Scarlett laughs.

SCARLETT
Yeah.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

A very frazzled Scarlett and Bonnie on the couch. Scarlett rubs her hands together, unable to sit still. Bonnie rubs down her shoulder, calming her down a bit.

Officers Winans and Grecco stand over them.

OFFICER WINANS

I don't understand. You say this person broke into your apartment but there's no forced entry. If the door creaked open by itself, it had to have been unlocked.

Bonnie looks to Scarlett for an answer. She is still out of it and very much upset.

OFFICER WINANS (CONT'D)

Are you absolutely sure you remembered to lock the door?

SCARLETT

No.

OFFICER WINANS

No, you're not sure?

SCARLETT

I mean no. I didn't forget. Do you think after getting a phone call like that I'd forget to lock the door? I'm not stupid.

OFFICER GRECCO

Nobody's calling you stupid. We're just getting your story straight for the report.

BONNIE

She's telling you what happened. So why don't you listen?

Scarlett folds her arms in protest.

OFFICER GRECCO

So, let me get this straight. This person never actually entered the apartment. Just knocked on the door and ran off?

Scarlett can't answer. Bonnie watches her.

OFFICER GRECCO (CONT'D)

Hello?

SCARLETT

(annoyed)

Yes. That's correct.

BONNIE

What difference does it make if he came inside? What about the next time? Maybe she won't be as lucky.

OFFICER WINANS

Look. This is Westwood. About ninety percent of your tenants are college kids. You figure it's Friday night. Two AM. The bars are closing. After a few beers, I wouldn't put it past some of these kids to do something stupid like knock on a pretty girl's door and run off.

SCARLETT

Excuse me, Officer. But what about the car in the alley? Or the phone calls?

The two partners share a look.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Are you telling me it's all just coincidence?

The two cops are strangely quiet. Not convinced by Scarlett's story.

BONNIE

She's asking you a question.

OFFICER WINANS

Okay, I'll bite. Did you get a description of this guy? Is he white? Black?

SCARLETT

I don't know. I never saw his face. I already told you guys that.

OFFICER WINANS

And how about the car in the alley? Did you get a make and model? The license tag?

SCARLETT

Yeah. It had four wheels and a roof.

Officer Winans sighs. He's had enough.

OFFICER GRECCO
 (to Officer Winans)
 Look, partner. Why don't you meet
 me in the car. Give me a minute
 with Scarlett and her friend.

Officer Winans huffs out loud on his way to the door. He
 shuts it behind him.

Officer Grecco snags a business card from his shirt pocket
 and hands it to Scarlett.

OFFICER GRECCO (CONT'D)
 Here's my number. My home phone
 and my cell. If you see any
 strange cars parked outside your
 window after hours. Get any more
 weird calls. Anything at all.
 Just give me a call.

SCARLETT
 That's it?

OFFICER GRECCO
 It really would help if we had a
 description of the guy. Meantime,
 don't answer anymore calls where
 you don't know the number and keep
 that door locked.

Scarlett nods in agreement. Bonnie throws her arms around
 her neck and holds her close.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - CHECKOUT LANE - DAY

A tired and restless Scarlett checks out a customer at her
 register. She's the walking dead. She rings up item
 after item, not paying much attention.

A very confused ELDERLY WOMAN stares at Scarlett with utter
 bewilderment. Her wrinkled mouth agape.

FIVE CUSTOMERS stand behind the woman, equally confused.

The dozens of groceries begin piling up at the end of the
 register line. Customers on their way to the door stop
 and watch the show.

ELDERLY WOMAN
 Excuse me, Miss.

Scarlett snaps out of it.

ELDERLY WOMAN (CONT'D)

Those don't belong to me.

Scarlett looks to her left and spots the massive pile-up of random groceries.

SAM watches Scarlett from the service desk. She picks up a phone and calls over the intercom:

SAM

Scarlett, you have a phone call on line two. Scarlett, you have a phone call on line two.

Scarlett turns to Sam, gives her a thumbs up.

AISLE FIVE

Scarlett heads to a phone hanging on a large metal pole near the center of the grocery aisle.

She picks up the receiver and hits LINE 1:

SCARLETT

This is Scarlett.

BONNIE (V.O.)

Hey. It's me. Listen. I'm not gonna be able to stay over tonight. I forgot I had plans.

SCARLETT

Jason?

BONNIE (V.O.)

No. With a friend. Just something I forgot about. Are you gonna be alright?

SCARLETT

Well. It's been three nights and no one's come to the door. No more phone calls. I think those cops scared him off.

BONNIE (V.O.)

You sure it's okay? If not, I can cancel.

SCARLETT

No, it's okay. I can't expect you to spend every night at my place. Thanks for being there for me.

BONNIE (V.O.)
 No problem. Thanks for getting me
 away from the creep.

Scarlett smiles.

BONNIE (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Call me later if you wanna talk,
 okay?

SCARLETT
 I will. Bye.

Scarlett hangs up. She almost doesn't notice the MISSING
 PERSON'S BULLETIN taped to the metal pole. The face of
 GRACIELLA SANCHEZ stares back at her.

Scarlett's mouth drops as she reads the finer details.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
 Are you kidding me?

INT. DOWNSTAIRS STOCKROOM - RECEIVING AREA - DAY

A couple of GROCERY STOCKMEN use pallet jacks to finish
 unloading the last crates of a grocery trailer.

One of the heavier and taller crates tumbles over as canned
 goods and other products spill and roll everywhere.

Chris and Nate stand outside the trailer, jacks in hand as
 they both wait their turn.

CHRIS
 Nice job.

The two stockmen in the trailer trip on the cans and fall on
 their asses like cartoon characters.

Chris has a good laugh. Nate gives him a dirty look.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
 What? That's not funny? Come on.

Scarlett moves her way around a maze of shrink-wrapped
 pallets and spots Chris in the receiving area.

He is still laughing at his co-workers expense.

STOCKMAN #1
 (to Chris and Nate)
 Don't bust your arm helping us out
 or nothing.

CHRIS
I'm good. Thanks.

NATE
You cold-blooded, brah.

CHRIS
Don't let me stop you.

Scarlett grabs Chris by the arm.

SCARLETT
We need to talk.

Nate gets himself an eyeful. Scarlett a bit creeped out.

CHRIS
Now? We're kind of busy here.

Scarlett spots the two buffoons in the truck still tripping on cans and racing after spilled product.

SCARLETT
They're gonna be awhile.

Scarlett drags him toward a liquor store room. She opens as the two of them duck inside and shut the door.

Nate stares back at the liquor closet. Intrigued.

INT. LIQUOR CLOSET - DAY

Chris yanks a metal chain hanging from the ceiling as a dim light bulb illuminates the cramped room. Crates of various liquors and beers fill the space.

Scarlett before him.

SCARLETT
That woman who was abducted. The one you told me about. She worked here, didn't she?

Chris sighs. He's been busted.

CHRIS
Yeah, she did. It happened just a couple of weeks ago before you started. She was leaving for the night and some guy drove off with her in her own car. They got the whole thing on camera.

SCARLETT

Why didn't you tell me?

CHRIS

I don't know. I guess I didn't wanna scare you off. You're one of the only females we got left in this place.

Scarlett turns her back on him, pacing the confined space like a train wreck.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Most of the cashiers up and quit when they found out what happened. Plus, with your car broken down, I didn't wanna freak you out walking to work and all.

SCARLETT

You should've told me!

Chris looks confused. Scarlett is tired, restless. Her eyes are dark and beady from lack of sleep.

CHRIS

What the hell's going on with you?

SCARLETT

This thing with Graciella. Do they have any suspects?

Chris stalls. A stupefied look.

CHRIS

Not that I know of. I don't know. Why?

SCARLETT

Somebody's been watching my apartment.

Chris squints, surprised.

CHRIS

Since when?

SCARLETT

Since a few days ago. I'm getting these weird calls. Someone's calling me, playing these weird songs then hanging up. I even chased him down the stairs with a baseball bat.

CHRIS
Did you call the cops?

SCARLETT
Yes. And they're not doing shit
about it. Lock your doors and
windows. The usual crap.

CHRIS
So what're you gonna do?

SCARLETT
I need you to give me a ride home
today. Hang out at my place for
awhile.

CHRIS
Yeah, sure. We can go get some
dinner, have a few drinks...

SCARLETT
It's not like that. I need you to
stay over. Spend the night.

CHRIS
Now you're just teasing me.

SCARLETT
I have a feeling he's gonna call
back. I need someone else there in
case shit goes down again.

Chris thinks it over.

CHRIS
I got an idea.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Chris and Scarlett stand at the top of the first floor steps
and adjust a tripod fitted with a video camera.

CHRIS
Now. Anyone who comes up those
steps and knocks on your door,
we'll know who it is.

SCARLETT
Unless they see the camera first
and come kill us anyways.

CHRIS
Yeah. Unless that.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Scarlett waits impatiently on her couch, stares down at her smart phone on the coffee table. She bites at her fingernails in anticipation.

Chris watches with amusement from another chair. He has the baseball bat in hand, ready for some action. He huffs in boredom, checks his watch.

CHRIS

As much fun as this is, you think we could turn on the TV? The suspense is killing me.

SCARLETT

No. When the phone rings I want you to be ready.

Chris nods.

CHRIS

Ready for what exactly?

SCARLETT

You're gonna meet him in the hall with that bat. I thought we established this already.

CHRIS

Yeah, maybe in your own mind but you forgot to let me in on this plan.

SCARLETT

Don't be a pussy. You'll be fine.

Chris scoffs.

CHRIS

And what if it's not some punk and it is the same guy who took Lucia? We don't know what this guy's capable of. He could have a gun or something.

SCARLETT

Do you have any other bright ideas?

CHRIS

What do you think the camera was for? Let the cops play hero. That's what they're paid to do.

SCARLETT

Okay, fine. If you're not gonna help me, you might as well put the bat away, tough guy. You're scaring the mice.

Chris walks to the door, bat still in hand, checks the peephole and the outer hallway.

CHRIS

You know, you should be nicer to me. I'm not always gonna be here.

Scarlett laughs with disgust.

SCARLETT

Don't pretend you're not loving every second of this.

Chris faces her.

CHRIS

What're you talking about?

SCARLETT

You've been wanting to see the inside of this place since I started work.

CHRIS

Oh, really?

SCARLETT

So what's the big plan, Chris? Light some candles. Bust out a bottle of wine. Turn on some Netflix. Put on a scary movie to get me nice and vulnerable.

Chris leans on the door, playfully flips the bat in his hand.

CHRIS

What's happening to you? Here I was thinking you were this nice innocent girl. You're just as fuckin bitter as I am.

SCARLETT

Sorry to disappoint you. Don't know if you've noticed or not, but I've had a time of it these last couple days.

CHRIS

Yeah, I noticed. We all go through hard times. But not everyone's out to get you, Scarlett. It's all in your own head. Trust me. I know from experience. No one does self pity better than me.

Scarlett gives up, leans back on the couch.

SCARLETT

How long have you been here?

CHRIS

In LA? Three years. Three of the longest years of my life.

SCARLETT

If you hate it so bad, why don't you leave?

CHRIS

The way I see it. I can stay out here and fail but know that I tried or I can go home and fail for sure. I don't really see the difference.

Scarlett lays down with her head propped on a pillow and her feet facing Chris.

SCARLETT

You ever think about having a normal life? Like, with a normal job?

CHRIS

You mean be just like everybody else? Just lay down and die? Accept my own fate? No. Not for a second.

SCARLETT

What if we're not meant to be here? And this is all just...in our own heads?

CHRIS

Don't tell me you're thinking about giving up already.

SCARLETT

Lately I've been thinking. Maybe this is all just God's way of telling me it's time to go home.

CHRIS

Maybe that's what you wanna believe
because you're scared to stay.

Scarlett tears up. She is truly sad and broken.

SCARLETT

I'm really tired. You think you
could watch the door for awhile
while I get some rest?

CHRIS

No problem.

Scarlett holds out her smart phone. Chris walks over and
snags it from her hand.

Scarlett curls up and shuts her eyes. Exhausted.

Chris smiles down at her. He walks to her bedroom. Moments
later he returns with a blanket. He drapes it over an
already dead asleep Scarlett.

He walks into --

THE KITCHEN

-- and to a small window overlooking the alley. He is on the
lookout and fully alert. He cracks the window a bit and
sparks up a fresh smoke.

SCARLETT (O.S.)

No smoking.

Chris smiles. Drops his smoke down the garbage disposal.

CHRIS

Gotcha.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN ON:

Scarlett asleep on the couch. Her smart phone has somehow
ended up back on the coffee table.

Chris is nowhere to be found. Her PHONE RINGS.

Scarlett jumps up immediately. She spots the ringing phone
which reads: "UNKNOWN CALLER"

She looks over her shoulder. No Chris. She's all alone.

After a few rings, she answers:

SCARLETT

Chris?

SONG (V.O.)

In the Still...Of the Night...I
held you...Held you tight. Cause I
love...Love you so...Promise I'll
never...Let you go...In the Still
of the Night...

(background vocals)

In The Still Of The Night...

Scarlett turns her attention to the door. THE SHADOW OF
SOMEONE under the crack. The door itself is UNLOCKED.

SCARLETT

Chris!

SONG (V.O.)

I remember...That night in May...
The stars were bright, up above.

Scarlett tosses the phone aside, runs to the door and locks
and deadbolts it.

SCARLETT

Get out of here!

CHRIS (O.S.)

Scarlett! It's Chris! Open the
door!

He beats his fist on the door.

SCARLETT

Chris??

CHRIS (O.S.)

That's right! It's me! Now open
up!

EXT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Chris is on the other side of Scarlett's door. He is
sweating. Panicked. Out of breath.

CHRIS

Scarlett! Come on! Let me in!

He beats his fist harder and harder.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Scarlett backs away from the door. Unsure of her next move and scared of what's awaiting her.

SCARLETT
Where the hell were you?!

CHRIS (O.S.)
I saw a weird car parked outside your window! A black four door, just like you said! I ran downstairs to check it out! You were right, Scarlett! He came back! Now let me in so I can talk to you face to face!

Scarlett still unsure.

SCARLETT
No! You left me! You left me here by myself like I told you not to!

EXT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Chris still on the other side. He is tired and rests his head against the door.

CHRIS
It was Lucia's car. I know it was. He drove out of here so fast I couldn't get the plate, but I know it was hers.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Scarlett opens a cutlery drawer and pulls out a large butcher's knife. She hides just to the left of the door and waits for Chris to break in.

SCARLETT
Go away, Chris! Just get out of here and leave me alone!

Scarlett holds her phone to her ear.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Yes. Someone's trying to break into my apartment. I'm at fourteen forty-nine Barrington Avenue, Apartment One Thirty Two.

CHRIS (O.S.)
Scarlett! What's going on?!

SCARLETT
(to Chris)
The cops are on their way! Unless
you wanna spend the night in jail
you better leave!

EXT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Chris digs in his pockets and comes up with nothing but spare change and lint.

CHRIS
(to himself)
Shit. Fuck me.
(to Scarlett)
I can't! You have my keys!

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - REAR ALLEY - NIGHT

Chris stands below Scarlett's bedroom window in the almost pitch black alley behind the building.

CHRIS
Scarlett, come on! Just throw them
down to me and I can go home! What
am I gonna do to you from here?!

ANGRY NEIGHBOR
Hey, shut up down there!

CHRIS
(to Angry Neighbor)
Mind your business! Go back to
bed!

Scarlett opens her blinds, stares down at Chris.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Scarlett! Just throw them down to
me! What're you doing?!

Around a dark corner walks OFFICER GRECCO pointing his gun at Chris's head.

OFFICER GRECCO
(to Chris)
Head's up, Romeo!

Chris slowly raises his hands in the air.

CHRIS
I'm not armed. Take it easy.

Officer Winans sneaks up behind him.

OFFICER WINANS
Hands behind your back! Now!

Chris rolls his eyes and places his hands behind his back.
He smiles and shakes his head.

OFFICER GRECCO
We're going for a little ride,
Chris.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Chris sits at a cheap folding table in a cold white room with no windows. A security camera hidden by white paint aimed down at his face.

He taps his fingers on the table and stares up at the camera with a shit eating grin.

INT. MEDIA ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Scarlett watches a black and white monitor and live feed of Chris in the interrogation room.

Standing with her are Officers Winans and Grecco and SGT. MIKE TUCKER (50s), white shirt, rolled up sleeves and the seasoned eyes of a veteran.

TUCKER
Just look at this cocky little
turd. He's loving this.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Chris pops a smoke and lights up. In the room walks none other than lead investigator Coswell.

Chris isn't surprised at all to see him. His look suggests he was all but expecting him.

CHRIS
Coz. Long time no see.

Coswell takes a seat before Chris and throws down a full stack of police reports. The contents of which spill out before Chris.

COSWELL

So, Mister Bond. We meet again.

CHRIS

Wanna tell me what I'm doing here,
Goldfinger?

COSWELL

Well, Chris. Lots of reasons.

Coswell just stares back at Chris in silence. Chris nods
with appreciation.

COSWELL (CONT'D)

I'm hearing rumors about you and a
new girl over at Don's. A real
pretty one.

CHRIS

You don't say.

COSWELL

That's right. They're saying
you've been making some weird calls
to her apartment in the middle of
the night.

CHRIS

Is that so?

COSWELL

Not only that, you tried to break
in a couple of times. But I say no
way. This Resnik kid is much to
slimy and cunning to do something
so stupid and sloppy.

CHRIS

I agree.

COSWELL

No. A guy like you would be a lot
more careful. You must got the
wrong guy. Now's the time where
you tell me how right I am.

CHRIS

She asked me to come over. She got
scared when she found out about
Lucia.

COSWELL

Is that right?

CHRIS
She thought this guy would call
again and he did.

COSWELL
Good thing for her you just
happened to be there.

Chris scoffs with disgust and leans back in his chair.

CHRIS
I saw her car. In the alley behind
Scarlett's apartment.

COSWELL
Who's car?

CHRIS
Lucia's. Graciella. I saw it
parked outside Scarlett's window.
I ran downstairs with the baseball
bat to try and scare him off and he
almost ran me over. I tried to
tell Scarlett but she wouldn't
listen.

COSWELL
Smart girl. She figured out your
game before it was too late.

Chris laughs and rests his face in his hands. Too tired at
this point to put up a fight.

COSWELL (CONT'D)
So you and Scarlett are buddies
now. You've known her all of a few
days and you're spending the night
in her apartment.

Chris loses patience, folds his arms in protest. Coswell
cocks his head, follows Chris's eyes.

INT. MEDIA ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Scarlett, Tucker, Winans and Grecco still watching the live
black and white feed.

WINANS
He can't even look him in the eye.

TUCKER
Oh, yeah. This kid's dirty.

Scarlett isn't so sure as she bites away at her fingernails. Officer Grecco notices.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

COSWELL

So what was the plan, Chris? You scare the shit out of her. Then invite yourself over to play the big, strong protector. Get her when she's nice and vulnerable.

CHRIS

You don't know me.

COSWELL

I know enough.

Coswell digs through the paperwork, pulls out Chris's personal files. His rap sheet.

COSWELL (CONT'D)

USC. A Kappa Sigma rush party. You and Linda Huston.

Chris stares up at the security camera.

INT. MEDIA ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Scarlett steps closer to the monitor as Chris stares back at her through the video camera.

Officer Grecco watches her closely.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

COSWELL

Your fellow frat brother's girlfriend. You two were drinking, having a real good time. You drop a few roofies in her drink, get her nice and zonked out. Until she couldn't tell the difference between you and her boyfriend. At least with the lights out.

Chris is ready to jump across the table.

COSWELL (CONT'D)

Only she wakes up the next morning and finds boyfriend passed out on the couch downstairs. And when you were nowhere to be found she put two and two together. Didn't she, Chris?

Chris chokes back tears as memories of that night come back to haunt him.

COSWELL (CONT'D)

You were a sneaky little shit then and you still are.

Chris gives him a hard stare. Real close now to leaping across the table and ending this.

COSWELL (CONT'D)

You see, a guy as arrogant as you wants everyone to know what he did. It's that much more thrilling when you get away with it.

Chris sucks up his anger, holds his composure.

CHRIS

You forgot one minor detail, Detective.

COSWELL

Yeah? What's that?

CHRIS

Those charges were dropped. But if you wanna do this dance all over again we can. I can tell you the same thing I told those cops two years ago. I'm not a stalker.

Chris leans in nice and close to Coswell.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

So, unless you're charging me with something I think we're done here.

Coswell returns Chris's smartass grin with his own.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

An etching in the glass door that enters this spacious squad room reads VIOLENT CRIMES DIVISION.

Through the door walks Coswell. He spots Scarlett and Tucker sitting at Tucker's desk while Officers Winans and Grecco hover over them drinking coffee.

COSWELL

He's a real cutie pie, isn't he?

TUCKER

So what all do we know about this kid?

Coswell walks to a coffee pot brewing on another desk, pours himself a tall cup.

COSWELL

In short. He's our biggest suspect in the Sanchez case. Everyone that mentions his name fingers him as some sort of stalker. Ask anyone at the supermarket they'll say he had it bad for Sanchez and wouldn't take no for an answer.

TUCKER

Any formal complaints from Sanchez?

Coswell takes a seat next to Scarlett and across from Tucker.

COSWELL

Nope.

TUCKER

Any other employees come forward about this kid that you know of?

COSWELL

Nothing.

TUCKER

So it's all just speculation at this point.

COSWELL

That and the fact he was standing outside Scarlett's bedroom tossing rocks at her window.

SCARLETT

Well. I did have his car keys.

Coswell watches Scarlett. He shoots her a sly grin like he's got the drop on her.

Scarlett looks down, ashamed. Tucker, Winans and Grecco all take notice.

TUCKER

What about this other girl from college he supposedly raped?

COSWELL

A few days after Resnik is picked up and formally charged, this Huston girl changes her story. Says she knew it was Chris the whole time. She was just saving face with her boyfriend.

Tucker shakes his head, not buying it.

COSWELL (CONT'D)

My guess. Chris's frat buddies probably threatened her. Told her they'd make life hell for her if this ever went to trial. Convinced her it wasn't worth ruining his life. Who knows?

OFFICER GRECCO

Excuse me. But it doesn't change the fact that Resnik roofied this girl when she was half unconscious.

Scarlett stares up at Officer Grecco. He offers her a warm smile in return. He's genuinely scared for her.

COSWELL

Good point.

TUCKER

Okay, so are we looking at anybody else?

COSWELL

The first time Resnik was questioned about his relationship with Sanchez he claims she was secretly seeing another employee. A grocery stocker named Nathan Garcia.

Scarlett turns white. A truly sickened look about her. She falls into a trance-like state.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - CHECKOUT LANE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Scarlett stares one lane over and spots Nate buying his lunch. He gives her a hard stare. His eyes are dark and sinister.

END FLASHBACK

INT. SQUAD ROOM - POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Scarlett still in a daze. The four cops all watch her reaction to the mention of Nate's name.

COSWELL

According to our manager Mister Ackerman, Chris says that Nate has himself a nasty temper and we should keep an eye on him.

TUCKER

Anyone else know about this supposed affair?

COSWELL

Can't find a single person on staff who can back Chris's story. Not one.

OFFICER WINANS

The kid's as dirty as the day is long.

Scarlett once again chews her fingernails. Officer Grecco keeps his eye on her.

OFFICER GRECCO

Something you wanna add, Scarlett?

SCARLETT

No. I'm fine.

Coswell turns his attention to Scarlett. She is distant and withdrawn, almost bashful.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - EMPLOYEE LOUNGE - MORNING

Scarlett stands at the sink, pouring packets of sugar into her iced latte. She is totally without rest with heavy bags under her once gorgeous eyes.

In walks Chris with dollar bill in hand. Scarlett watches him as he stuffs his buck in the soda machine.

He turns, catches eyes with her. She instantly looks to her coffee and continues stirring.

Chris's soda drops. He quickly snags it up, pops and chugs half the can.

CHRIS
Surprised to still see me here?

Scarlett chugs her coffee and ignores Chris.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Sorry but us serial killers have to earn a living just like you regular folk.

SCARLETT
I don't think you're funny.

CHRIS
It was at least kind of funny.

Chris giggles. Scarlett throws him a nasty look.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Now that we're getting things all out in the open. Sharing our true feelings and such. I don't like being accused of things I didn't do. All it took was one phone call and the cops think I'm this sicko stalker rapist.

SCARLETT
I think it was a lot more than just a phone call from me that did it, Chris.

CHRIS
You're talking about things you know nothing about.

SCARLETT
I know enough.

Chris laughs.

CHRIS
Yeah, that's what Coswell said. He knows even less about me than you do. He looks at you and he sees Linda. He looks at me it's once guilty, always guilty.

Scarlett isn't impressed. She folds her arms and leans on the counter with zero interest.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

I look at you and I see a girl who's too used to getting things her way.

SCARLETT

Oh, really?

CHRIS

Linda had the same problem. She made her decision. Instead of owning up to it she made me out a predator.

SCARLETT

Is there a point to all this? I'm running late.

CHRIS

You see, that's just it, Scarlett. You're all about you and your own little world you've created. You ask for my help. Okay, fine. I try to help you and you throw me to the cops with no questions asked.

Scarlett looks away, ashamed of herself.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

Pretty girl like you. You twinkle your little eyelashes and shed a few tears and they're ready to lock me up and throw away the key. And that's bullshit.

SCARLETT

I gave you my phone.

Chris play stupid.

CHRIS

What?

Scarlett steps closer to Chris. Her eyes never leaving him and staring into his soul.

SCARLETT

My phone. The one you ever so conveniently left on the table last night while you were downstairs. I guess that was just an accident.

CHRIS

So it's like that, huh? Okay.
Well. Good luck to you. Hope you
get that car fixed. You got
yourself some long walks ahead of
you.

Chris heads for the door.

SCARLETT

Is that a threat?

He stops.

CHRIS

No threat. Just letting you in on
the fact that you just lost your
only ride home. Have a good shift.

Chris heads out. Scarlett rubs her tired eyes and angrily
chucks her latte in the trash.

INT. MEAT LOCKER - FROZEN FOODS - DAY

Nate and Manny load full boxes of frozen entrees onto a hand
held dolly. A cold white fog in the air.

In walks Chris who taps Manny on the shoulder. Manny turns
around.

MANNY

Shit, man. I got a knife in my
hand. Don't be sneaking up on me
like that.

CHRIS

Give me a second with Nate dog.

MANNY

Hell are you talking about? We
gotta truck to unload.

CHRIS

Two minutes. Come on. I'll get
lunch.

MANNY

You'll get lunch? That's a fuckin
first.

Manny takes off his gloves and steps over product on his way
to the heavy freezer door.

Nate watches as Manny dips out. It's just him and Chris.

CHRIS

So tell me, Nate. How long were you seeing her?

NATE

Hell are you talkin about, dog?

CHRIS

I bet you gave the cops a lot of dirt on me, didn't you?

Nate steps over the hand-held dolly and gets in Chris's face.

NATE

You got something to say, man?

CHRIS

You figured I was gonna rat you out for what I saw happened down here. So you made up a bunch of juicy stories about me and Lucia. It didn't matter what I told the cops about you. After all, I'm the one with the dark past, right?

NATE

Hey, man. I don't know what this is or what the fuck you're talking about. But you better step off, homie.

CHRIS

I'm talking about you and Lucia. About what I saw. Don't play me, Nate.

Nate grins back at him.

NATE

Maybe you should run it by me one more time, holmes.

CHRIS

I'm talking about when she pulled you off the floor. Brought you down here where you could be alone. Then tried to break it off.

Nate loses his sly grin. He grows worried.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

She told you what an embarrassment you were and couldn't bare the thought of anyone finding out about the two you. She figures it would be kinda hard getting that promotion if she's still fuckin one of the help.

NATE

You gotta big mouth, dog.

CHRIS

Then. Right before you shoved her into the wall and nearly broke her arm, she told you how she was going back to her husband to straighten out her marriage. Good thing I walked in before you could do any more damage.

NATE

Yeah, I remember. Too bad the cops don't know nuthin about it. All they lookin at now is you.

Nate pokes him in the chest.

NATE (CONT'D)

For some reason, they all thinkin you some kind of mad dog killer.

Chris fights the urge to slug him. He just nods and smiles.

NATE (CONT'D)

Maybe because they know how much you like hurtin girls. Just like that bitch from college.

CHRIS

You're the only one hurting people around here.

Nate presses his box cutter to Chris's face, barely missing his left eye. Chris dodges the blade, a bit scared.

NATE

You know, you should watch what you say, homie. You just might get your tongue cut out. Slice your little white ass into pieces and stick em in this freezer, ya feel me?

Chris is at a loss for words. He stares down the sharp blade and afraid to flinch.

CHRIS
Yeah. I feel you.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DAY

Chris heads up a few steps and enters the second story hallway and main offices.

On one side of the hall there are copy and fax machines. On the other side, row after row of file cabinets and employee mailboxes with name plates.

Chris stops in front of the manager's office. The door cracked open just a bit. He peeks inside.

No one there. He helps himself inside.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Chris locks the door behind him and immediately spots an old file cabinet next to Brad's leather chair.

He walks to the cabinet, runs his fingers down each of the drawers, searching for something. The first drawer marked A-F. The second G-L and the third M-R.

Chris opens the third drawer.

He begins thumbing through each of the personnel files of every employee with the last names M-R.

Chris turns, faces the door. He sees the SHADOW OF SOMEONE ON THE OTHER SIDE.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - DON'S FOOD MART - DAY

Chris paces the floor, holding a smart phone in hand. He is angry, fuming, ready to explode. He catches eyes with --

SCARLETT waiting in a chair. Her eyes also locked in on Chris and very confused by the situation.

KAREN (30s) young manager type, short and tough, khaki pants, also watches Chris from the end of the hall. She is holding a walkie talkie in hand.

From the walkie:

BRAD'S VOICE (O.S.)
Are you there?

KAREN
(into walkie)
I'm here. We're all here.

LOUD FOOTSTEPS coming up the stairs. And then --

Karen steps aside as Brad and Nate join the group.

Chris and Nate lock eyes. A staring contest between two stubborn hard asses.

NATE
Watchu lookin at, dog?

BRAD
(to Nate)
Sit down and be quiet.

Nate takes a seat. He stares back at Scarlett who refuses to acknowledge him.

NATE
What up, Scarlett?

Scarlett keeps her head down.

Nate smirks and shakes his head.

NATE (CONT'D)
Yo, whatever, man.

BRAD
Alright. Just what in the hell is
all this about, Chris?

Chris hands the smart phone to Brad.

CHRIS
Take a look at who Nate has on his
contact list.

Scarlett perks up. Her interest piqued. She stares back at Nate who is the one looking down this time.

BRAD
Where did you get this?

Nate jumps out of his seat, points a boney finger at Chris.

NATE
Motherfucker took it out of my
locker, man!

BRAD
Keep your mouth shut and sit down!
And watch your language!

Nate steps to Chris. Brad pushes him back.

BRAD (CONT'D)
I said sit down!

Nate composes himself and slumps in his chair.

CHRIS
Temper temper.

NATE
Fuck you, man!

KAREN
That's enough! Both of you!

BRAD
Chris. What're you doing with his
phone?

CHRIS
Scarlett's file is missing. That's
how he got her address and phone
number. He's the one who's been
calling her apartment all week.
Check for yourself.

Scarlett's eyes are on Nate as he angrily bounces both knees
and can't sit still.

BRAD
You went into my office looking for
Scarlett's file?

Scarlett switches her attention to Chris. He briefly glances
back at her, a bit embarrassed.

CHRIS
Listen to me, Brad. He came up
here, got into your private cabinet
and took out Scarlett's file.
Think about it. Nobody else
outside of this building has access
to her private information.

BRAD

Nobody but you apparently.

Chris realizes what he's done and hangs his head.

Nate once again jumps to his feet, pointing at Chris and ready to throw down.

NATE

Yo, don't listen to him, man! He's a lying motherfucking piece of shit!

Karen gets between them.

KAREN

Sit down!

Nate gets in her face.

NATE

(to Karen)

Yo, you need to step off with all that screaming!

KAREN

You're not doing yourself any favors, young man! Now sit down and be quiet! I won't tell you again!

Karen's eyes are unflinching with real power and authority. Nate smiles back at the little fireplug. Impressed.

NATE

Yes, mam.

Nate takes his seat.

BRAD

(to Chris)

You wanna explain to me what you're doing digging around in private files and taking Nate's phone?

CHRIS

You wanna fire my ass? Fine. Just take a look at the phone. Look at the dates. Scarlett's name's gotta come up fifty times.

Brad checks the phone for outgoing calls. Scarlett, Karen, Nate, everyone on the edge of their seats.

BRAD
(to Nate)
Nate, go wait for me in the lounge.

NATE
Yo, what's going on?

Brad gives him a stern look.

BRAD
The lounge.

Nate stares back at Scarlett. He's looking apologetic and vulnerable for the first time.

He dips out. Heads for the stairs.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Scarlett, you can go back to work.

Scarlett tries to get a read on Chris who can barely look her in the eye. She also heads for the stairs.

BRAD (CONT'D)
(to Chris)
He never called her. Not once.

Chris can't believe it.

CHRIS
So what? Her number's still in his phone.

BRAD
(to Karen)
Gee. Wonder how that happened.

Karen smirks.

BRAD (CONT'D)
Look. I don't know what it is between you and this girl and I don't care. All I know is I got a whole crew of cashiers ready to walk out on me because they think they're working with a killer.

Chris gives up. Hands on his hips.

BRAD (CONT'D)
The only reason you are still here is that cop wants to keep an eye on you. Well he's gonna have to do it somewhere else.

CHRIS
What does that mean?

BRAD
It means I want you out of here in the next five minutes. If I see you in here again, even buying groceries I'll have you trespassed and arrested.

Chris smirks with disgust as he stares at Brad and Karen.

CHRIS
Always a pleasure, Karen.

He nudges past her on his way to the stairs. Karen and Brad watch him quietly as he ducks around a corner.

KAREN
(to Brad)
What do you think?

BRAD
I think he's out of here and someone else's problem now.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - SERVICE DESK - NIGHT

Sam is stuffing a cream filled cake in her snack hole as Scarlett shuffles her way to the exit. A long shift comes to an end.

SCARLETT
Goodnight, Sam.

Ashamed of herself, Sam quickly pushes the rest down her neck and crumples the plastic wrap.

SAM
(muffled)
Good-night.

Sam shamefully wipes crème filling and cake crumbs off her work vest as Scarlett watches with amusement.

An all too familiar song comes over the speaker:

RADIO DJ
And here's The Five Satins from
Nineteen Fifty Six with In The
Still Of The Night.

SONG (O.S.)
In The Still...Of The Night...

SCARLETT
Oh my God.

SONG (O.S.)
I Held You...Held You Tight...

Sam finishes cleaning her shirt and spots Scarlett looking dumbstruck and lost in a trance.

SONG (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Cause I love...Love You So...

SAM
What's your deal?

Scarlett shrugs her off and heads for the door.

SCARLETT
Nothing. Good night.

SONG (O.S.)
Promise I'll Never...Let You Go...

SAM
Weirdo.

EXT. DON'S FOOD MART - PARKING LOT - NIGHT

The lot is mostly empty. The usual line of cars on the front end belong to the overnight crew.

Scarlett walks out, stops and stares out, into the dark and still night, taking special notice of the eerily quiet street at the far end of the lot.

SCARLETT
Here we go again.

Scarlett takes a deep breath and starts across the lot.

Careening around a corner and flying into the half empty lot is none other than Graciella's BLACK CHEVY IMPALA.

It comes to a SCREECHING HALT about fifty yards in front of a frightened out of her mind Scarlett.

She turns and faces the store. Sam locks the doors for the night and hobbles off.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Sam!

She faces the Impala as the trunk pops open.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Hello??

Out of the trunk crawls a badly beaten and taped at the wrists Graciella Lucia Sanchez.

She drops to the asphalt and squirms toward the store like a wiggly worm. She is fully nude if not for the silver duct tape wrapped around her privates.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Oh my God.

Graciella screams and cries through the tape on her mouth.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

I'll call for help!

Scarlett digs for her phone in her back pack. She's not having any luck.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Shit, come on!

Graciella manages to stand upright and hop her way toward a shopping cart corral.

The BLACK IMPALA spins out, pulls a U-Turn and barrels toward Graciella at top speed.

Scarlett watches in horror.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

No!!!

Graciella SCREAMS THROUGH HER GAG as she's ultimately crushed head on by the oncoming car.

She goes TUMBLING OVER THE ROOF and to the asphalt.

Scarlett breaks down in tears. Sam unlocks the front door and hobbles into the lot.

SAM

(to Scarlett)

Dumbass! Get inside!

She grabs Scarlett by the arm as they race for the door.

The BLACK IMPALA darts toward the front entrance and barely misses the two girls. Scarlett follows behind Sam who quickly locks up.

LATER THAT NIGHT

GRACIELLA lay mangled and dead. The SHADOW OF A MAN hovers over her.

Coswell and Officers Grecco and Winans at the scene. The RED AND BLUES of their squad car shine bright in an otherwise dimly lit lot.

All three cops stare back at --

Scarlett sitting on the curb by the front door. Bonnie rubs her down as Jason smokes and paces behind them.

The entire overnight GROCERY CREW are all watching the action from the front of the lot. Brad and Karen keep them all in line and away from the scene.

COSWELL

What the hell's she doing walking home alone?

OFFICER WINANS

Her neighbors were supposed to pick her up over an hour ago. When she couldn't get in touch she decided to hike it home.

Coswell shakes his head.

COSWELL

Stupid stupid.

OFFICER GRECCO

The better question is why weren't we watching her? Talk about stupid.

COSWELL

Because we got sloppy. Because I was busy watching Resnik.

OFFICER WINANS

Hell are you talking about? You telling me Resnik didn't do this?

COSWELL

I've been sitting on his apartment since Ten PM. This kid's slick but he can't be in two places at once.

Officer Winans and Grecco huff in unison. They are back to square one and out of suspects.

Coswell spots Jason watching them all from the front door. He puffs a cigarette and couldn't care less.

COSWELL (CONT'D)
Who's the guy?

OFFICER GRECCO
That's the boyfriend.

COSWELL
Scarlett's? I didn't think she had one.

OFFICER GRECCO
No. The neighbor's. Becky. Or Bonnie or whatever.

Coswell studies Bonnie's face. Her eye still dark and bruised up.

COSWELL
Pretty tattoo on her eye. He give that to her?

OFFICER WINANS
Don't know. That would be my guess. Why?

Coswell and Jason lock eyes again.

COSWELL
No reason.

FRONT ENTRANCE

Jason loses interest and stomps his cigarette. He joins the girls at the curb.

JASON
(to Bonnie)
Come on. Let's get out of here.
What are we doing?

Bonnie stares up at Jason with a supportive arm around Scarlett's neck.

BONNIE
Why don't you just chill and give us a minute?

JASON

I don't like being back here. You know that.

Scarlett stares up at Jason with suspicion. Jason returns her sour glare.

BONNIE

It's been six months. Get over it already.

Jason's blank and expressionless look suggests he's grown tired of his girlfriend's relationship with Scarlett.

JASON

Whatever. I'm waiting in the truck.

Jason heads for his pick-up parked at the curb. Scarlett keeps a close eye on him.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Scarlett is all by her lonesome as she loads a wet load into a beaten old dryer. A phone on speaker:

BONNIE (O.S.)

Sorry about Jason yesterday. He's been getting worse and worse.

A bottle of vodka and a glass rests on a folding table.

Scarlett pours herself another.

SCARLETT

Speaking of Jason. I didn't know he worked at Don's.

ON SCARLETT'S PHONE next to the bottle of vodka. Bonnie's name on the caller ID.

BONNIE (O.S.)

Are you kidding? Half the building worked there at some point in time. Why are you asking?

A CAR DOOR SLAMS in the b.g.

Scarlett turns and faces the open laundry room door that enters the garage. No one there. The room is shrouded in darkness and shadows.

SCARLETT
Wanna tell me what happened?

BONNIE (O.S.)
What do you think? Meat head
exploded on somebody. Beat the
shit out of him.

SCARLETT
Really?

BONNIE (O.S.)
We're talking probation. Community
service. The whole thing. Not
something he likes to talk about.

SCARLETT
What was the fight about?

BONNIE (O.S.)
Who do you think?

SCARLETT
You?

BONNIE (O.S.)
What can I say. He's very
protective in a deeply disturbed,
psychotic kind of way.

Scarlett paces the floor taking sip after sip of her drink
and growing more frightened by the second.

SCARLETT
So. How does he feel about us
spending so much time together?

BONNIE (O.S.)
What do you mean?

SCARLETT
I mean. Is he okay with it? Does
he get jealous?

BONNIE (O.S.)
Jason's cool with you. It's me he
has the problem with. I think he
knows I'm leaving.

A beat.

BONNIE (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Why are you asking me about Jason?
You're weirding me out.

Scarlett can't answer. She just paces the floor like a nervous wreck.

SCARLETT
No reason. Forget it.

BONNIE (O.S.)
You're being weird.

Scarlett takes a seat on the folding table and pours herself another tall one.

SCARLETT
Speaking of weird. I noticed something last night. When I was leaving the store.

BONNIE (O.S.)
What's that?

SCARLETT
It was that song. In The Still Of The Night. It was playing over the speakers. Not just then. I mean I hear it a lot at the registers.

BONNIE (O.S.)
No shit. Did you tell that cop?

SCARLETT
I guess after everything that happened I forgot to mention it.

Scarlett stares at her phone and sees Chris's name and number on call waiting.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
Hey. I'm getting another call. I'll talk to you later.

BONNIE (O.S.)
Hey. Promise me you'll call that cop about the song.

SCARLETT
Yeah. I will. Talk to you later.

Scarlett goes off speaker, takes the new call and puts the phone to her ear.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
What do you want?

CHRIS (V.O.)

Just as I suspected. I don't see a single cop out here. Not one patrol car. Not one unmarked. Let's face it. Cops just don't care.

Scarlett races for the door, peeks into the dimly lit garage and searches for Chris.

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Not until there's a body or two. Their job is to solve crimes, not prevent them. They're clean up men. Plain and simple.

SCARLETT

You haven't answered my question. What do you want?

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - STREET CURB - NIGHT

Chris is parked at the curb, watching the building and the surrounding streets. His cell phone on speaker.

CHRIS

(to Scarlett)

I told the cops that Nate hit Lucia. I watched him do it. But they didn't listen. Just like no one's listening now. All they see when they look at me is the past. You know what they say? You can't escape your past.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Scarlett maneuvers her way round the dozen or so parked cars in the small and cramped garage. She stares into the rear alley on the lookout for Chris.

SCARLETT

When you say the past, you mean that girl from school. Linda.

She peeks through the grooves of the enclosed iron gate and checks both ends of the thin and dark alley.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I thought I could get away from it but I can't. LA isn't as big as you think it is.

(MORE)

CHRIS (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Sometimes you can't escape people.
 Even taking a job at an obscure
 grocery store halfway across town.

SCARLETT
 Where are you?

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - STREET CURB - NIGHT

Chris is on the verge of tears.

CHRIS
 All it takes is that one person
 that recognizes you. Next thing
 you know, the whole place is
 watching you. Looking at you
 differently. And your past comes
 back to haunt you all over again.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Scarlett moves through the maze of cars and back toward the
 laundry room door. She is cautious and careful of her
 surroundings.

SCARLETT
 You already hurt one girl. Why
 should I believe you won't do it
 again? Tell me that.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 Is that what those cops told you?
 I hurt girls? You don't have to
 believe everything they tell you,
 Scarlett.

A TENANT crashes through the stairwell door with a basket of
 unwashed laundry and startles Scarlett.

SCARLETT
 Shit.

CHRIS (V.O.)
 A couple years ago, I let them
 convince me I raped Linda. Even
 though the truth was a little
 different. But I kept that shit
 inside of me for two years. All
 that guilt. Getting up every
 morning and looking in the mirror.
 Not knowing who was looking back at
 me.

CHIRP-CHIRP! CLICK! The sound of a car being unlocked and the BRIGHT GLOW OF A CAR'S TAILLIGHTS frighten Scarlett.

A TENANT walks to his pick up truck in the far corner.

Another COUPLE walk into the garage from the stairwell door as Scarlett once again spins in a circle.

She races into --

THE LAUNDRY ROOM

-- where one of her neighbors is staring at her phone and waiting on her load to finish.

Scarlett stares back at her in a panic. The young woman returns her stare with a confused look.

YOUNG WOMAN

Can I help you?

SCARLETT

Sorry.

CHRIS (V.O.)

I learned to hate myself for a long time for what I thought I did. I let other people convince me I was something I wasn't. The truth is, that bedroom wasn't so dark. Linda knew the game and she played it.

SCARLETT

Why are you telling me this? What difference does all this make?

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - STREET CURB - NIGHT

Chris checks his rear view mirror for anything suspicious and keeps his eyes peeled.

CHRIS

Because it's important you believe me, Scarlett. When I first met you, I thought great. Finally someone who knows nothing about me or my past. Maybe I can start fresh. Let her decide who I really am. Whether or not I'm a guy she can trust.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Scarlett once again checks the dark garage. It's all quiet and not a soul in sight.

CHRIS (V.O.)
I guess you could say you were my
second chance, Scarlett.

A beep on Scarlett's phone. Call waiting. She checks the caller ID: COSWELL.

SCARLETT
I gotta go. I got a call coming
in.

Scarlett switches callers.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
Yeah, Coswell. It's Scarlett.

COSWELL (V.O.)
Chris is watching your building.

EXT. MINI MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Coswell sits in an unmarked sedan watching the rear alley of Scarlett's building. A phone to his ear.

COSWELL
We're all here. Covering the front
and back. I just saw you in the
garage a minute ago. Where are you
now?

SCARLETT (V.O.)
I'm in the laundry room.

COSWELL
Okay. Stop what you're doing and
get in your apartment. Lock the
door. I don't want you to panic
but we're not taking any chances
with this kid. Got it?

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Scarlett stares back and forth between the garage and the woman doing her laundry.

YOUNG WOMAN
Is there something going on I
should know about?

SCARLETT
No. Everything's fine.

COSWELL (V.O.)
Scarlett. Do you hear me?

SCARLETT
Yeah, I'm going right now.

She hangs up.

EXT. MINI MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Coswell in his car watching the back alley of the building.
His phone still to his ear.

COSWELL
Scarlett. Are you there? Hello?

He hangs up.

COSWELL (CONT'D)
Fuck.

He picks up a walkie:

COSWELL (CONT'D)
You still awake, Winans?

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Officer Winans watches the rear alley from an across the way
office building parking garage. Not a car left in sight and
all the lights are out.

He peeks his head around a corner, on the lookout for anyone
coming up the alley toward Scarlett's building.

He puts a walkie to his mouth.

OFFICER WINANS
All's quiet on the homefront here,
boss.

COSWELL (V.O.)
How we looking, Danny.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Officer Grecco stands at a window overlooking the street in front of Scarlett's building. He is directly across the way in a more upscale complex.

OFFICER GRECCO
No movement from Resnik. He's just sitting there.

COSWELL (V.O.)
Just make sure Scarlett gets inside and she's safe.

OFFICER GRECCO
Gotcha.

Officer Grecco uses a pair of binoculars to stare through the first floor hallway window.

COSWELL (V.O.)
You got eyes on Scarlett or not?

OFFICER GRECCO
Not yet.

COSWELL (V.O.)
What the hell is she doing?

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Scarlett waits for her load to stop its dry cycle. She can't stand still.

SCARLETT
Come on, come on. Hurry the fuck up.

YOUNG WOMAN
If you need to use the bathroom, I can watch your stuff.

SCARLETT
No, I'm fine. Thanks.

The load of clothes finally comes to a stop. Scarlett jerks the door open and tosses them in her basket.

YOUNG WOMAN
That still looks wet to me.

Scarlett snaps and slams the dryer door shut.

SCARLETT

No offense. But leave me alone,
okay?

YOUNG WOMAN

Sorry. Just saying. It's just
gonna get all wrinkled.

SCARLETT

This is my week so far. I lost my
first real acting job. The reason
I moved out here in the first place
mind you. My car broke down.
Someone broke into my apartment.
And last night I watched a woman
get run over by a car, not once but
twice. So if I seem a bit out of
it, that's why. I'm sorry.

The Young Woman goes back to her phone.

YOUNG WOMAN

Welcome to LA.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Officer Grecco uses his binoculars to keep an eye on the
hallway. A couple of girls get off an elevator and head
for their apartment with shopping bags.

OFFICER GRECCO

Come on, Scarlett. Where are you?

He grabs his walkie:

OFFICER GRECCO (CONT'D)

Coswell, you got eyes on Scarlett?
What's going on?

COSWELL (V.O.)

No I don't have eyes on her.
You're telling me she never came
up?

OFFICER GRECCO

I got nada.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - NIGHT

Officer Winans spots a car coming up the alley with lights on
and they're coming fast.

OFFICER WINANS

We got company.

The car flies through the alley and continues past the apartment garage toward a stop sign. It makes a left turn and it's gone.

Officer Winans steps into the alley.

COSWELL (V.O.)

Talk to me.

OFFICER WINANS

False alarm. Just a car passing through.

COSWELL (V.O.)

Gotcha.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Officer Grecco turns his attention from the first floor hallway to Chris's car.

Chris is out and on his way to the door. A tenant on her way in holds open the door for him.

OFFICER GRECCO

Shit. Chris is on his way up.

INT. MINI MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Coswell behind the wheel.

COSWELL

What happened to he's getting out of the car and walking to the door?

OFFICER GRECCO (V.O.)

I was watching the window.

COSWELL

The moment you see Resnik in that window we're moving in.

INT. ELEVATOR - NIGHT

A THIN YOUNG MAN is dressed in a 1950s style grey suit with a bright colored bow tie. He slides on a creepy plastic mask with the features of an ordinary man and the greased back quaff of a fifties doo-wop artist.

It's Graciella's abductor. A box cutter in hand.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - LAUNDRY ROOM - NIGHT

Scarlett unloads the rest of her laundry, throws them back in the basket and heads out for real this time.

YOUNG WOMAN

I hope things get better. You know. No more dead bodies at least.

Scarlett ducks out.

YOUNG WOMAN (CONT'D)

Yeah. Love you too.

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - PARKING GARAGE - NIGHT

Scarlett moves through the garage with her basket of laundry and toward the stairwell door. She holds the basket against her as she pries open the door.

Meanwhile, a smart phone GLOWS in her back pocket.

In she goes.

EXT. MINI MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Coswell with the phone to his ear.

COSWELL

Come on, come on. What the hell?

INT. STAIRWELL BASEMENT - NIGHT

Scarlett moves up the steps toward the first floor. The basket is heavy and it shows.

DOO-WOP MAN leaps over the railing and lands on the steps in front of Scarlett. She spots the box cutter.

SCARLETT

Shit.

She tosses the laundry in his face.

A kick to the balls.

He tumbles down the stairs and lands on the flat below. He faces Scarlett and grabs his left arm in pain.

Scarlett also trips and stumbles down some steps. Her smart phone slides out of her rear pocket.

Scarlett gathers herself and notices that DOO-WOP MAN has completely disappeared.

She digs in her pocket. No phone.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

What the...

She spots her phone GLOWING AND RINGING in front of the basement door -- still propped open with a brick.

She slowly heads down the steps toward it.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Please don't let me die.

EXT. MINI MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Coswell behind the wheel. Hopping mad now.

COSWELL

Answer the fucking phone!

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT

Scarlett finally reaches her phone and snags it up. Coswell's name on the screen.

She answers:

SCARLETT

Coz, he's here! He's in the building!

Chris runs down the steps and grabs Scarlett's arm.

CHRIS

Scarlett.

She SCREAMS and drops her phone.

It lands on a random step. Coswell still on the line.

COSWELL (V.O.)

Scarlett! Scarlett, are you there?

CHRIS
Listen to me!

Scarlett slaps, kicks and screams. Chris has enough and pushes her against the stairwell wall.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Shut up a second! Listen to me!

SCARLETT
How did you get in here?

CHRIS
I just got off the phone with Crystal. I had her swipe Nate's phone from the break room when he was in the john.

SCARLETT
What're you talking about?

CHRIS
He called her, Scarlett. He called her eight times the night she was abducted. I didn't catch it before because I was too worried about you. It's proof, Scarlett.

SCARLETT
I don't believe you.

CHRIS
It's true. If you don't believe me I can have her swing by and show you herself.

Scarlett thinks it all over. She slowly comes around.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
It's Nate. We gotta take this to Coswell. Can you get him to meet us here?

SCARLETT
He's here.

CHRIS
Who's here?

SCARLETT
Nate! He's here! He was just here! He tried to kill me!

Chris checks both ends of the staircase.

A couple of TENANTS open the basement door.

The door SLAMS SHUT on its own. The brick that usually holds it open is pushed outside and on the grass.

The two tenants walk around a startled Chris and Scarlett and head upstairs.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

We need to get inside right now.

CHRIS

Come on.

Chris grabs Scarlett's hand as they rush up the steps toward the first floor.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Officer Grecco watches Chris and Scarlett enter the hallway and rush toward her apartment.

OFFICER GRECCO

He's got her! The sonofabitch has Scarlett! Move it in!

EXT. MIN MALL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Coswell angrily throws open his door.

COSWELL

Fuck!

He chases across the small lot, across the rear alley and toward Scarlett's building.

EXT. BASEMENT DOOR - NIGHT

Coswell rushes toward Officer Winans who can't seem to get the rear door open. The brick is in the grass.

COSWELL

What the hell are you doing?

OFFICER WINANS

The fuckin door is closed. Are you blind?

COSWELL

Keep trying. I'll take the front.

Coswell races for the front of the building.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Coswell meets Officer Grecco at the door. He is busy trying to yank the door off the hinges. The Young Woman from the laundry room heads for the elevator.

OFFICER GRECCO
Hey! Open the door!

INT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - LOBBY - NIGHT

The Young Woman stares back at Officer Grecco and Coswell slapping their shiny badges against the glass.

OFFICER GRECCO
Hello! How are you doing?!

YOUNG WOMAN
Good.

OFFICER GRECCO
Wonderful. Now.
(slowly)
OPEN-THE FUCKING-DOOR!

YOUNG WOMAN
Oh, crap.

She drops the basket and heads to the door.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chris peeps through the peephole. Scarlett behind him.

SCARLETT
Oh God.

CHRIS
What is it?

SCARLETT
My phone. It's on the steps. I don't remember his number. We'll have to call the cops.

CHRIS
Fuck that. And wait an hour for them to get here?

Chris pulls a twenty two pistol from the back of his pants.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
I'll go nail this bitch myself.

Scarlett shocked.

SCARLETT
What the hell is that?

CHRIS
It's a gun. What does it look like?

SCARLETT
I know what it is. Why do you have one with you?

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Officer Grecco and Coswell race to Scarlett's door and give several hard knocks.

OFFICER GRECCO
Scarlett, open the door!

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chris and Scarlett hear him on the other side.

SCARLETT
It's them. It's the cops.

CHRIS
Yeah, right.

Chris aims his pistol at the door.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Ask him who it is?

SCARLETT
Did you just hear what I said?
It's Danny. Danny Grecco. He's a cop. He's with Coswell. Now open the door.

Chris checks the peephole. No one there.

CHRIS
Who is it?!

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Officer Grecco on one side of the door. Coswell on the other. They both hold guns.

COSWELL

You know damn well who this is,
Chris. Now open the door.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Chris looks panicked. He backs away from the door. His gun still in hand. Scarlett's eyes never leave his firearm and grows increasingly nervous.

CHRIS

These assholes, man. They're just
gonna kick in the door and haul me
away.

SCARLETT

You were about to call them
yourself! Now what's keeping you?

CHRIS

I need Nate's phone. The proof.
We gotta wait for Crystal.

SCARLETT

Hell are you saying? Just open the
door and you can show him Nate's
phone later.

CHRIS

I'm in your apartment with a gun,
Scarlett. One I bought off
craigslist without any serial
numbers on it. Think about that
for a second.

SCARLETT

You're not doing yourself any
favors. I'm answering.

Scarlett heads for the door and unlocks the deadbolt.

CHRIS

Wait!

Chris aims his gun at Scarlett just as Officer Grecco and
Coswell bum rush the apartment.

Coswell fires off a shot.

Chris is struck in the right ear and thrown to the floor.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
You motherfucker!

Coswell rushes to Chris, kicks his twenty two across the tile where Officer Grecco picks it up.

Scarlett watches in horror as Coswell cuffs Chris's hands behind his back.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Take it easy!

OFFICER GRECCO
(to Scarlett)
LA just keeps getting better and better doesn't it?

Scarlett heads straight for the liquor cabinet and grabs a fresh bottle of tequila. She twists the cap and chug a lugs.

Officer Grecco watches her.

OFFICER GRECCO (CONT'D)
Are you okay?

SCARLETT
You mean like am I still alive? No bullets in me? Then yes. I'm okay. Otherwise, not so much.

OFFICER GRECCO
Well I'm glad you're still alive. If that's worth anything.

SCARLETT
Not much. But thanks.

Officer Grecco smiles.

OFFICER GRECCO
You're welcome.

Coswell pushes a wounded Chris out the door.

COSWELL
(to Scarlett)
Welcome to LA.

SCARLETT
Yeah. Thanks.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - STREET CURB - NIGHT

Chris is loaded in an ambulance by a couple of paramedics as Coswell and Scarlett watch on.

Officer Grecco and Officer Winans jump in Winans car and head off for the night.

COSWELL

We found the suit and tie, along with the mask tossed in the trash compactor upstairs. The same direction Chris was coming from when he ran into you.

SCARLETT

Why'd he do it? I mean. None of this makes any sense.

Coswell grins.

COSWELL

Welcome to --

SCARLETT

-- LA. Yeah, yeah.

Coswell pats her on the shoulder and heads for his car, now parked at the front curb.

Scarlett heads after him.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Chris mentioned something about Nate's phone.

Coswell stops, turns back.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Calls he made to Graciella the night she disappeared. Did you guys know anything about that?

COSWELL

We looked into it.

SCARLETT

You don't find that weird?

COSWELL

I'll tell you what I know. Chris was the only one who walked into that building tonight.

(MORE)

COSWELL (CONT'D)

And the only one with a gun and in your apartment. If Nate was here, we would've spotted him.

Scarlett nods.

SCARLETT

So it's over?

COSWELL

Scarlett, I've been doing this a long time. I've known guys like Chris Resnik my whole life. He's arrogant. He's manipulative. And he don't take no for an answer. He's as wrong as wrong gets.

Scarlett still not sure.

SCARLETT

So it's over?

Coswell stalls.

COSWELL

Yeah. It's definitely over.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - MORNING

Officers Grecco and Winans perp walk Nate through aisle five of the supermarket as employees watch on.

Scarlett and Sam come up the aisle from the other end. Scarlett in utter shock.

SCARLETT

Now what's happening?

Nate gives Scarlett a sad as he passes. Officer Grecco can barely look Scarlett in the eye.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Seriously. What's happening?

SAM

Detective Coswell's waiting for you in the break room. Brad too. They wanna talk to you.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - BREAK ROOM - DAY

Coswell sits across from Scarlett. Each of them nurse a couple cans of soda.

Brad hovers behind Coswell.

BRAD

How hare you holding up, Scarlett?

SCARLETT

Terrible. Thanks for asking.

BRAD

Yeah. Dumb question.

SCARLETT

A little. But thank you.

She cracks a smile. Brad smiles back.

COSWELL

Scarlett, we did a locker search. Not just Chris. But everyone.

SCARLETT

Okay. And?

COSWELL

We found Graciella's wedding ring in Nate's locker. It was in a baggie along with some other jewelry, a few random keys and a pair of brass knuckles. The knuckles had blood on them.

SCARLETT

Oh my God.

COSWELL

We'll most likely get a match with Graciella.

SCARLETT

Keys? You said keys.

COSWELL

Yeah. My guess is old Nate rummaged through your locker when you weren't looking. Grabbed your keys and ran across the street on his lunch break. Made himself a copy or two. Explains how he got into your apartment.

SCARLETT

How do you know the ring was hers?

COSWELL

The husband. He identified it a little under an hour ago.

SCARLETT

Oh God. That's terrible.

Scarlett checks with Brad who is rather unmoved by this new revelation.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

I don't get it. Chris has been going on and on about Nate. And it's like you guys never listened.

Brad turns away, ashamed of himself.

COSWELL

I know. Facts are, on paper, he's got a clean record.

SCARLETT

Unlike Chris.

Coswell nods.

COSWELL

Yeah. Unlike Chris.

Scarlett slumps down, elbows on the table, rubs at her sore and stressed out temples.

SCARLETT

I guess we've all got some apologizing to do.

COSWELL

I'm not gonna apologize for doing my job. He may not have killed this woman. But I still don't like him.

SCARLETT

Who are you to judge him?

COSWELL

Stay away, Scarlett. He's trouble.

Brad throws a buck into the soda machine. As he's waiting for the can to drop, he rubs his sore left shoulder.

Scarlett notices. Coswell follows her look.

Brad faces them and cracks his soda.

Scarlett's eyes never leave him. Coswell watches her.

COSWELL (CONT'D)

You okay?

Scarlett and Brad lock eyes. Brad sips at his soda with pure lust in his eyes.

SCARLETT

I'm fine.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Scarlett takes a fresh bowl of popcorn to the couch.

A LOUD KNOCK at her door. She stops. Unsure.

SCARLETT

Hello?

No answer.

She rests the popcorn on the kitchen counter and checks the peephole.

SCARLETT'S POV:

Bonnie on the other side. Her face is black and blue.

BACK TO SCENE

Scarlett unlocks the deadbolt and opens.

In walks Bonnie. Her face still shiny and glistening from a fresh new bruise.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Shit, Bonnie. Now what happened?

BONNIE

What can I say, Officer? I fell off my bike.

SCARLETT

That's not funny.

BONNIE

So I come home today with a bit of bad news for old Jason.

(MORE)

BONNIE (CONT'D)

I told him I quit my job and was moving back home to Phoenix. He wasn't exactly happy about it.

Bonnie points to her face.

SCARLETT

So you're definitely moving?

BONNIE

Yeah. About the same reaction I got from him.

Bonnie heads to the kitchen and grabs a frozen bag of peas from Scarlett's freezer. She holds it to her face.

Scarlett winces at the sight. She rushes to the kitchen and grabs a dish towel from the oven door.

Bonnie hands her the peas as Scarlett wraps them in the towel and hands them back to Bonnie. They have done this a few times before.

SCARLETT

I didn't think you were leaving so soon.

BONNIE

Yeah, well. God works in mysterious ways.

SCARLETT

What does that mean exactly?

BONNIE

It means I was able to get another loan from a friend.

SCARLETT

A friend? You mean your ex?

BONNIE

Yeah, so? My ex. So what?

Bonnie snags a beer from Scarlett's fridge and takes a huge chug a lug.

SCARLETT

Help yourself.

Bonnie pops the top and takes a swig.

BONNIE

What's your problem all the sudden?

SCARLETT

You've been taking a lot of money from this guy. I hope you know what you're doing.

BONNIE

What I'm doing is getting out of here.

SCARLETT

And does your ex know that? Sounds to me like he's thinking about reconciliation.

BONNIE

God, Scarlett. I'm finally able to get out of here and you're giving me a lecture? I don't get it.

SCARLETT

I'm sorry but this sounds like you're getting yourself into something pretty complicated. I'm worried about you.

Bonnie smiles and unfolds an envelope from her jeans pocket. She pulls out stacks of hundred dollar bills.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

What in the --

BONNIE

Look at this. Look at all this fucking money, Scarlett. It's enough for both of us to start over. Get our cars fixed and get the fuck out of here. Me and you.

SCARLETT

What did you do? Rob a bank or something?

Bonnie laughs.

BONNIE

No, I didn't rob a bank. It's him. My ex. I've been working him for the last three months.

Scarlett shuts her eyes to this. She is angry and totally disappointed at Bonnie.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

You see, my ex. He's obsessed. Like really really obsessed. When things started getting weird I had to break it off. But lately I've been putting the bug in his ear about getting back together.

SCARLETT

Oh God, Bonnie.

BONNIE

But first I need a few bucks. Tie up some loose ends. Get out of my lease. Blah blah blah.

SCARLETT

I can't believe you. I mean, I knew you were kind of a leach but this is a whole new level of low.

BONNIE

Excuse me, Miss Texas. What else am I supposed to do, Scarlett?

SCARLETT

Move in with me. Stay here. Finish out your lease.

BONNIE

Why's that? So Jason can kick down the door and beat the shit out of both of us? Just look what's happened to you this month.

SCARLETT

What about me?

BONNIE

Are you kidding? You were almost killed and the cops almost didn't do shit to stop it.

Scarlett grows weary of the conversation and grabs herself a beer from the fridge.

SCARLETT

So call the cops. Have him arrested.

BONNIE

Yeah. Until the next time. And then what?

Scarlett is out of answers. She swigs her beer.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Look. I don't care about right and wrong anymore. Just getting out of here and getting my life back. If you ask me, God wanted both of us out of here a long time ago. I say we take it as a sign and do it.

Scarlett stares down at Bonnie's stack of bucks. Bonnie notices and smiles.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

What do you say?

Scarlett opens her door for Bonnie.

SCARLETT

I say good luck.

Bonnie loses her chipper smile.

BONNIE

That's it?

SCARLETT

I think you're right. You need to get out of here. Away from him. Maybe this is the only way to do it. So good luck.

Bonnie throws her arms around Scarlett. They give each other a nice long hug.

BONNIE

Thank you.

SCARLETT

Yeah. Just be careful.

Bonnie dips out. She faces Scarlett.

BONNIE

Look. After I leave. There's a slight chance my ex might come looking for me. If you could maybe not let on you know.

Scarlett doesn't follow.

SCARLETT

Why would he come here? Did you tell him about me or something?

Bonnie slowly cracks a grin.

BONNIE

Well. You sort of work for him.

Scarlett's jaw drops.

SCARLETT

Brad? Brad is your ex?

BONNIE

Remember that big fight with Jason
I told you about? How he got
fired?

SCARLETT

Him and Brad got into it?

BONNIE

Sorry I didn't tell you sooner.
But I kind of didn't for obvious
reasons. I was worried you'd think
less of me.

SCARLETT

Trust me, Bonnie. I couldn't
possibly think less of you right
now.

Bonnie giggles.

BONNIE

I'll make sure I swing by before I
leave. Have a couple drinks or
something.

SCARLETT

Yeah, sure. Take care of yourself.

BONNIE

Lock your door.

Bonnie heads for the elevator.

SCARLETT

Gee, thanks.

Scarlett shuts the door and leans her back against it. She
is once again in panic mode.

INT. DON'S FOOD MART - BREAK ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Brad rubs down his sore left arm.

INT. STAIRWELL - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

DOO-WOP MAN in his suit and mask rubs his sore left arm at the foot of the stairs.

END FLASHBACK**INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT**

Scarlett still by the door. Her PHONE RINGS on the surface of her computer desk.

Scarlett snags it up: "UNKNOWN CALLER"

She answers:

SONG (V.O.)
In The Still...Of The Night...I
Held You...Held You Tight...

Scarlett can't believe it. She hangs up. She immediately checks the peephole on her door.

SCARLETT'S POV:

No one there.

BACK TO SCENE

Scarlett dials Coswell's number and waits.

SCARLETT
Come on. Pick up.

Someone KNOCKS ON THE DOOR. Scarlett once again tosses her phone across the tile in a panic.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
Shit.

Some more LOUD KNOCKS at the door. Scarlett panics and runs into her bedroom and shuts the door.

INT. SCARLETT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Scarlett locks her door and backs away from it. She takes a seat on the edge of her bed.

SCARLETT
Coz. Please please please tell me
you got my call and you're on the
way over here.

The LOUD KNOCKING at the door continues. Scarlett breaks down in tears. She's reached the breaking point.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
Go away. Just please leave me
alone.

The KNOCKING STOPS. Scarlett stands up, stares back at her closed bedroom door.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)
Coswell, where are you?

A GLOVED HAND reaches out from under her bed and grabs Scarlett's right ankle.

She SCREAMS OUT in horror and runs for the door.

DOO-WOP MAN in his grey suit, bow tie and fifties style face mask appears from under the bed.

Scarlett unlocks and bolts for the front door.

DOO-WOP MAN follows.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Scarlett races into the hall and heads for the stairwell.

DOO-WOP MAN catches up with her and grabs her around her waistline. She kicks and fights as he drags her toward the opposite end of the hall.

An outside railing overlooks the thin rear alley of the apartment building.

DOO-WOP MAN attempts to push Scarlett over the side.

She puts up a fight.

SCARLETT
Oh, God! Somebody help me!
Please!

Chris runs up behind them, grabs DOO-WOP MAN and wrestles him to the ground.

Scarlett turns, faces them, still out of breath.

Chris and DOO-WOP MAN are halfway down the hall now, pushing each other into walls, shoving fists and fingers into each other's faces.

Scarlett walks up the hall toward them.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Chris!

Chris is finally able to get the best of DOO-WOP MAN and tosses him to the hallway floor.

A silver six shooter also drops to the floor.

Scarlett spots the gun and snags it up.

Brad takes off his mask, exposing his face.

Scarlett covers her mouth in horror. She grips the six shooter with both hands -- takes aim.

Before she can squeeze off a shot --

Chris tackles Brad head on.

Brad goes CRASHING THROUGH THE HALLWAY WINDOW.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Brad falls from the first floor hallway window and drops like wet cement on the front walkway.

A WOMAN passing with her dog SCREAMS in outright terror.

Chris and Scarlett stare out the broken window at Brad's limp corpse staining the cement red.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Chris turns to Scarlett. A silly grin.

CHRIS

What can I say? I was just in the neighborhood.

Scarlett laughs and cries at the same time. She just about collapses when Chris grabs her and holds her tight.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - NIGHT

A coroner's crew loads Brad's dead body into a meat wagon while Chris squats on the curb and watches.

Coswell stands with Scarlett eating serious crow.

SCARLETT
Well, Coz. You think it's
definitely over now?

COSWELL
We should've stayed with you. We
owed you that much. I'm sorry.

SCARLETT
It's not me you owe an apology.

Scarlett stares back at Chris watching them from the curb.

Coswell turns and stares down at Chris. The two stubborn men
staring back at each other in silence.

Coswell cracks a grin.

COSWELL
Well. I can see you're in good
hands here. I'll leave you to it.

Chris smiles. He faces forward and puffs his cigarette.

Coswell turns to Scarlett.

SCARLETT
Not much of an apology.

COSWELL
It's the best I can do.

SCARLETT
I guess it'll have to do then.

COSWELL
Just remember.

SCARLETT
Keep the door locked.

COSWELL
What else?

SCARLETT
Don't answer any weird calls.
Yeah, yeah.

Coswell smiles and heads to his car.

COSWELL
(to Chris)
Mister Resnik. Behave yourself.

CHRIS
Yes, sir, Officer.

Coswell opens his car door, gives Chris a sharp and dead serious look.

COSWELL
See you around.

Chris throws him a cocky grin and stomps his smoke. Scarlett grabs Chris by the hand.

SCARLETT
Come on. Let's go in.

Chris watches Coswell leave. An uneasiness about him. He walks with Scarlett to the door.

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Scarlett and Chris make out in the middle of the living room. They finally come up for air.

SCARLETT
I guess what I'm trying to say is thank you.

CHRIS
I like that. I can't wait to show you my "you're welcome".

SCARLETT
Any other night I'd probably slap you in the face.

CHRIS
I think there's been enough violence for one week.

SCARLETT
Yeah. Me too.

CHRIS
All this excitement. I sort of have to use the bathroom.

Scarlett laughs.

SCARLETT
Don't let me stop you.

Chris heads for the bathroom and shuts the door. Scarlett is all smiles. All is quiet on the home front. Until --

Chris's PHONE BUZZES on her computer desk. She walks over and takes a look.

A text just came in:

Justin - Thanks again for your support and for putting my name in the mix. I absolutely LOVE the script and am looking forward to working with you.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Justin.

Scarlett thinks back.

INT. THUNDER CAT ENTERTAINMENT - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Scarlett stands before the idiot secretary chewing gum and taking up space. She is upset and confused.

SCARLETT

I don't understand. Justin said the part was mine.

INT. TONY BELL'S OFFICE - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Tony sits on the edge of his desk and looms over a freaked out and uncomfortable Scarlett.

TONY

Why don't you and me...and Justin and Phil go out tonight. See what we can work out...

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Scarlett stands in shock.

TUCKER (V.O.)

This kid's dirty.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Coswell and Scarlett watch as Chris is loaded in the back of the ambulance with a wounded ear.

COSWELL

Scarlett, I've been doing this a long time. I've known guys like Chris Resnik my whole life. He's arrogant...

INT. SCARLETT'S APARTMENT - NIGHT (PRESENT DAY)

Scarlett still standing in shock.

COSWELL (V.O.)
He's manipulative. And he don't
take no for an answer. He's as
wrong as wrong gets.

Scarlett rummages through his texts. All messages and sexy
headshots from wannabe actresses.

Scarlett so red hot with anger she breaks down in tears.

Moments later...

Chris flushes and walks back out. He looks up and spots an
unamused Scarlett standing with Chris's phone in hand.

CHRIS
What's going on, Scarlett?

SCARLETT
You tell me. Justin.

Chris tries to conceal a shit-eating grin. He gives Scarlett
a slow clap for her troubles.

CHRIS
You got me.

SCARLETT
I got you.

CHRIS
Welcome to LA, Scarlett from Texas.
It's kill or be killed out here.

SCARLETT
Coz was right. You really are a
piece of shit.

CHRIS
Yeah. A piece of shit who saved
your life tonight. Let's not
forget.

SCARLETT
You hear to collect your reward?

CHRIS
It's what I deserve.

SCARLETT

You deserve to be in jail.

Chris smirks.

CHRIS

Let me guess. We're back to Linda again.

SCARLETT

I'm real happy you've moved past all that, Chris. But I'm sure she hasn't. Not by a long shot.

CHRIS

What do you want me to say? You want me to apologize? Go turn myself in?

SCARLETT

No. No, it's too late for all that now.

CHRIS

I agree. So let's put it behind us. You've had a helluva week. Let's give ourselves a break.

Chris slowly walks to Scarlett. She surprises him with Brad's silver magnum.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

What the fuck is this?

SCARLETT

Don't you take another step.

CHRIS

You're losing it. You know that?

SCARLETT

This is your fault. All of it. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for you.

CHRIS

Stop looking at me like I'm some kind of killer. That was Brad. Remember?

SCARLETT

No. You're just a rapist.

Scarlett pulls an orange prescription bottle from Chris's back pack and tosses them at his chest.

SCARLETT (CONT'D)

Those look familiar? You lousy piece of shit.

Chris is at a loss for words. He simply stares down the barrel of Brad's gun.

CHRIS

Go on, Scarlett. Do it. Try explaining this one to those cops. They've been here more this week than Amazon Prime. Trust me. They're over it.

SCARLETT

Yeah, well, I'm not.

Scarlett pulls back the hammer. Her eyes full of tears and full blown rage.

CHRIS

I'm gonna leave now. I'm gonna very slowly walk to the door and go home.

Chris puts one foot in front of the other. Scarlett follows his every step with both hands on the gun.

Chris is almost to the door.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

If you start shooting now you might kill the neighbors. So try and relax.

Scarlett steps closer to him. Her gun aimed and her eyes on the prize.

Chris opens the door and steps into the hall.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

See you at work.

Chris ducks down the hall. Scarlett lowers her gun and slams the front door shut behind her. She slides her back against the door and balls her eyes out.

After a few moments, she slowly heads for the living room. Brad's gun to her side.

COSWELL (V.O.)
Remember. Keep the door locked.

Scarlett faces the door just as --

Chris breaks it open with a stone cold killer's vacant look in his eyes. He's ready for blood.

Scarlett aims and fires. POW!

The first bullet strikes Chris in his stomach as he tumbles into the outer hallway.

He bleeds out as Scarlett steps into the hall. She aims Brad's gun, ready for a second shot.

Chris attempts to stand. He turns, faces Scarlett. She looks him in the eye and fires again: POW!

Chris drops to the floor. He's all done.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - LOBBY - NIGHT

All is quiet and without a soul in sight.

SONG (V.O.)
Shoo-wap, shoo-wah. Shoo-wap,
shoo-wah...

The elevator door opens. Scarlett steps off with Brad's gun still in hand.

SONG (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Shoo-wap, shoo-wah. Shoo-wap,
shoo-waah-aah...
(lead vocals)
In The Still...Of The Night...

Scarlett opens the front door and steps outside.

EXT. PARK WEST APARTMENTS - NIGHT

Scarlett steps out, into the night, with Brad's gun still at her side and with an empty look about her.

SONG (V.O.)
I Held You...Held You Tight...Cause
I Love...Love You So...Promise I'll
Never...Let You Go...In The Still
Of The Night...
(background vocals)
In The Still Of The Night...

123.

Scarlett takes a seat on the street curb as the sound of
nearing POLICE SIRENS drown out the music.

FADE OUT.

THE END