

L.A. Confidential
"PILOT"

by
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based on the novel by James Ellroy

Third Draft

Name (of company, if applicable)
Address
Phone Number

TEASER

SMASH IN:

LOS ANGELES, 1952

(N.B.: EVERYTHING VERITE, EVERYTHING REAL. THIS IS NO NOSTALGIC DREAM. NO NOIR LIGHTS, NO FANCY CAMERA ANGLES, NO SCORE. THIS IS 1952 FILMED LIKE IT'S HAPPENING RIGHT NOW - BECAUSE IT IS)

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EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - NIGHT

LA from the hills, a world turned upside down. A black sky, a bowl of stars below. A GLIMPSE of the Hollywood sign from the back - DOOWYLLLOH.

Two cars parked almost nose to nose. MEN on both sides hold shotguns and submachine guns at their sides.

TWO MOBSTERS stand face to face between the cars. They trade a bag for a heavy suitcase. The FIRST MOBSTER puts the suitcase on his hood, opens it.

SEE wax paper packages filling the suitcase. On top of the bundles, SEE a Tijuana Bible (a cheap X-rated comic book) with the title "WHEN HUBBY'S AWAY."

The SECOND MOBSTER, thumbing through cash from the bag, sees his "what the fuck" look.

SECOND MOBSTER
I'm done with it.

EXT. ROAD. GRIFFITH PARK - NIGHT

The first mobster's car rolls down a hill, deep in the park's wilderness.

A tree sits across the road. The car rolls to a stop.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

The first mobster, suitcase on his lap, sits shotgun. He squints into the night. He points to the driver side.

FIRST MOBSTER
What's that?

FIRST MOBSTER'S POV: A skinny man, hard to make out in the dark.

SEE a submachine gun. SEE a rubber clown mask.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The first mobster's side window SHATTERS - a second clown mask, this guy big and beefy, stands outside, holding his shotgun butt-first. He rears back for a second blow. This one CRACKS across the face of the first mobster.

SEE blood splash against the windshield.

BIG MAN
Excuse me, darlin'.

He reaches in and yanks the suitcase out the busted window. Him and the skinny clown disappear in the dark before the mobsters can react ...

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EXT. DOWN THE HILL. GRIFFITH PARK - MOMENTS LATER

A BLACK PLYMOUTH sits parked at the side of an empty road next to the side of a hill.

The two masked men come down the hill out of the bushes, climb into the car and speed off into the night ...

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EXT. THE VISTA - DAY

CUT TO bright daylight lighting up a poster for SINGIN' IN THE RAIN. A small crowd lines up for a matinee.

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LES WEISKOPF - late 30s, skinny, bags under his eyes - gives off bad-news vibes. He sweats, scratches his arm. He ducks past matinee-goers lined up under the Vista marquee.

Les is on edge as he steps off the curb to get to the driver side door of his black Plymouth - the edge sharpens as beat cop OFFICER MARVIN HANEY steps up to him. Les hurries with the key, fumbles, not fast enough.

HANEY
Hey there, pal. You been in Hancock Park today?

WEISKOPF
Look like I got Hancock Park dough?

HANEY
I got a peeper taking snaps of little girls through their windows. Your car fits the description. You got a camera on you?

Haney side-eyes the inside of Weiskopf's car.

HANEY'S POV: trashed but nothing suspicious.

WEISKOPF
No, and I get my kicks normal.

(CONTINUED)

Maybe he does, but he's hinky as hell.

HANEY
How about you pop the trunk then?

WEISKOPF
Nothing in there.

HANEY
Then you got no reason to be a hard-
on.

WEISKOPF
Yeah. Sure thing, officer.

Weiskopf turns like he's going to open the trunk. He pulls a
PISTOL. He turns and presses the gun to Haney's stomach -

GUNSHOT.

SEE blood blossom on Haney's torso.

Passersby look on in shock. Weiskopf hops in his car, starts
it, stomps gas, pulls out at speed through a red light.

A Helm's Bakery truck rolls in front of Weiskopf - the car
crunches into the truck. Donuts fly from the back.

Weiskopf, nose busted, tries to shift into reverse - no good,
his bumper is snarled with the truck. Weiskopf stumbles from
his car, wipes his bloody nose, runs.

FIND Haney on the street, bleeding out.

SEE Haney's eyes lose focus.

HANEY'S POV: the poster for Singin' in the Rain GOES BLURRY
then BLACK.

L.A. CONFIDENTIAL ...

INT. DARK ROOM - DAY

A mahogany table, a grainy B&W photo: a headshot of a
grinning child in a 1930s-era cap, a huge grin - think Spanky
from Our Gang.

EDMUND EXLEY - early 30s, cold, obviously brilliant,
authoritative - pushes the photo across the table to an older
man - PRESTON.

CHYRON: ED EXLEY

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXLEY

Wee Willie Wilson, child star in Raymond Dieterling's stable goes missing September 12, 1934. A grounds keeper for the Glendale Rail Station finds him two weeks later.

He slaps down another grainy B&W photo - FLASH horrorshow details: legless torso, feet sewn on where the hands should be, a crown of bird legs sewn to the forehead.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

It was mostly him, anyway. Dr. Frankenstein used parts from a Negro boy and a blackbird as well.

He slaps down a third photo, a grainy blow-up of the morgue shot: thick thread stitched into flesh.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

The killer used catgut to sew his victims back together. Have you seen this kind of knot before?

PRESTON

They're Japanese square knots.

EXLEY

And these knots are unusual?

PRESTON

They're ornamental.

EXLEY

You know how to tie them?

PRESTON

Yes.

EXLEY

Interesting. Rare, ornamental knots, used on every victim.

PRESTON

I don't see what that has to do with me.

Exley turns up the heat.

EXLEY

This was Dr. Frankenstein's sixth victim.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

EXLEY (CONT'D)

Every victim, the knots are the same, "ornamental." Nobody knows that except the killer and the police. And you recognize these rare knots.

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(angry)

And you don't see what it has to do with you?

Preston's face changes. We see the grandeur of the man - PRESTON EXLEY, former hero detective, now bigwig real estate developer - when he speaks.

PRESTON

No. No, son, that won't do. Get angry at the wrong time and your man will freeze.

Preston lectures, but kindly, as he opens the windows to let the sunlight in and REVEAL they are in a well-appointed home library.

PRESTON (CONT'D)

If you twist your man the right way - love him and hate him to precisely the right degree - he'll tell you everything. That's how I caught Loren Atherton for the Dr. Frankenstein killings and sent him to the electric chair.

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Exley hates mistakes, especially in front of his father.

Looking to soften the blow:

PRESTON (CONT'D)

Over these practice sessions you've learned every detail of a twenty year old case. It's impressive.

EXLEY

It's your masterpiece.

(checks his watch)

I want to practice again tomorrow night.

Preston wants to help his son, even though he's weary of this.

PRESTON

Very well, son.

INT. EXLEY MANSION - LATER

Exley puts on his uniform - he's not a detective, just a uniformed policeman. In front of him, family photos - lots of them feature men in uniforms.

Behind him, a scale model of a Disneyland-like theme park, DREAM-A-DREAMLAND. Towering SPIRES, an ARTIFICIAL MOUNTAINTOP, ROLLER COASTERS.

Preston enters.

EXLEY

Dream-A-Dreamland looks spectacular.

PRESTON

It looks like the fever dream of a sugar-addled toddler. The life of a developer, I suppose. Building whatever you're paid to build, even if it's ridiculous. Once my life was murder and mayhem. Now it's Moochie Mouse and Danny Duck.

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EXLEY

You miss it.

PRESTON

I miss the opportunity to do good. Absolute justice.

He says it like a motto, or a benediction. Exley's a true believer.

EXLEY

Absolute justice.

Preston reaches Exley, sees he's standing in front of a particular photo.

SEE a photo of THOMAS EXLEY - looks like Ed, but more dashing in his LAPD uniform.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

The brass will make their decision soon about the position in homicide.

PRESTON

Stay honest, stay reliable, and you'll be rewarded. If not as a detective, as something just as important.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXLEY

Thomas was going to be your Chief
of Detectives.

Preston's lost in memories.

PRESTON

He was a war hero. A Bronze star.
He had such a future ahead of him.

He never notices how his worship of Thomas eats at Exley.

EXLEY

I can't help I was a clerk in the
war.

PRESTON

Use your brains, Edmund, that's
your strength. Thomas was my hero.
You don't have to be.

That hurts Exley - he takes the pain and swallows it down as
one of Preston's aides enters.

AIDE

Excuse me, Mr. Exley. The station
called, asked for Edmund to come
in. I'm afraid an officer's been
shot.

Off Preston and Exley, concerned looks ...

INT. DWIGHT'S PLACE - NIGHT

A shabby apartment hallway. BUD WHITE - 30, a noble savage in
a detective's suit - walks down the hall, stops at a door. *

SEE his scabbed knuckles as he knocks on the door. *

KATHY JANEWAY - fourteen, wary, peeks through the barely open
door. *

BUD

I'm looking for Dwight Gillette. *

KATHY

Dwight's not here. *

He shows her his badge. *

BUD

Detective Bud White. I'll wait. *

She stands aside as Bud enters, takes in the tacky apartment. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUD'S POV: a battered little suitcase, full of girl's things, *
in a corner. *

KATHY *

What kind of name is Bud anyway? *

He looks at the kid, decides to share something. *

BUD *

Kind they call you when your real *
name is Wendell. *

KATHY *

Yeah, your mom got that one wrong. *
You're no Wendell. *

BUD *

How old are you? *

KATHY *

Fourteen. Why do men always ask you *
that? *

BUD *

(re: the suitcase) *
You're fresh off a bus is my guess. *
You know what Dwight is? What he *
wants you to do? *

She's streetwise, looking to shock him. *

KATHY *

Same thing my uncle did to me back *
in Broken Arrow. At least Dwight's *
going to get me paid for it. *

BUD'S POV: a bruise on her arm. Five fingers and a palm. *

BUD *

Dwight do that? *

The answer is obviously yes. Bud tamps down volcanic rage. *

BUD (CONT'D) *

You don't want this. I'll buy you a *
bus ticket home. *

KATHY *

(defiant) *
I won't go back to Broken Arrow. *
Send me back and I'll run away *
again. *

He thinks a beat. *

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BUD

I'll move you over to the Royal
Court motel. I'll float you til you
find a job. A real job, not
hooking.

Before she can answer, the door opens and in walks DWIGHT
GILLETTE, a tacky pimp with slicked back hair.

DWIGHT

Who the hell is this?

Bud turns, badge on his belt. Violence crackles around him.

BUD

Heard you were a pimp, likes to
tune up his girls. Came here and
caught you pandering a minor.

DWIGHT

Don't know what you're talking
about. Neither will my lawyer -

BUD

How 'bout you dance with a man for
a change? You beat me, you walk.

Dwight considers, nods in agreement.

DWIGHT

With pleasure.

He comes forward. Bud smiles - ah, sweet release. He takes a
punch to give one. Brutal, powerful. Dwight goes down. Bud
goes down after him with a punch that bounces Dwight's skull
off the floor.

Bud digs in Dwight's pockets, pulls out a money clip. He
turns to Kathy. Murder in his eyes.

BUD

Get to that motel. I'll check on
you later. Go.

She snatches the money, goes. While he's distracted, Dwight
reaches into his boot, finds a straight razor, goes for Bud's
throat -

Bud gets the razor hand. TWISTS. CRUNCH. Dwight's useless
hand drops the razor. He lifts Dwight, shoves him -

INT. KITCHEN. DWIGHT'S PLACE - CONTINUOUS

- into the kitchen.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Bud smacks him into the counter next to the sink. *

BUD *
You're retired as of now. I hear *
you're back on the stroll and I'll *
take you in on a kiddie raper beef. *
Know what they do to kiddie rappers *
in Quentin? *

DWIGHT *
Send me up, detective, see what *
happens. I was boss jock last time *
I was down, I'll be boss jock *
again. *

Bud flips the switch. The garbage disposal GROWLS. Dwight *
smiles like "you don't have the stones." *

DWIGHT (CONT'D) *
I'll do my bit and then I'll be out *
here running this whore and every *
other whore I can corral - *

BUD *
With what hands? *

Bud shoves Dwight's good hand down the drain. Dwight SCREAMS *
as the disposal GOBBLES ... *

INT. BUD'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER *

Bud gets into his car, tamping down everything, coming back *
to earth. *

DISPATCH (O.S.)
Officer White, report.

BUD
(on radio)
Yeah.

DISPATCH (O.S.) *
Officer involved shooting at Sunset *
and Hollywood. Detective Stensland *
is at the scene. *

BUD *
On my way. *

INT. STUDIO CITY MANSION - DAY

Money don't buy taste. Everything garish, gold plated, zebra-
striped. GOLD RECORDS on the walls.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ATONAL PIANO NOTES play out - an avant garde jam session.
FOLLOW the music ...

SEE a muscled-up young man - BOBBY INGE - sitting on a WHITE PIANO BENCH, leaning back against the GRAND PIANO, his elbows poking the keys - the avant garde tune - while a man with a gorgeous head of hair and a velvet robe blows him.

JACK VINCENNES - swagger and flash, mid-40s, - walks in BADGE-first.

CHYRON: JACK VINCENNES

JACK
Nice place.

LIBERACE - the celebrity piano player, the man on his knees - turns to face Jack. Bobby zips up.

LIBERACE
What are you doing here?

JACK
Thought I heard an assault. Instead
I find you violating act 286 of the
California penal code.
(mock surprise)
Hey, aren't you Liberace?
(to Bobby)
Beat it, kid.

Bobby throws Jack a wink on his way out. Now it's just Jack and Liberace. Liberace sits on the piano bench, using charm to mask his sadness at another shakedown.

LIBERACE
Can I offer you some champagne,
Detective Vincennes?

Jack can't help digging this.

JACK
You know who I am?

LIBERACE
I read the scandal sheets when I'm
in the make-up chair. The
adventures of Hollywood Jack
Vincennes make such a splash. Not
so much lately though. Now, about
that champagne?

JACK
I don't drink.
(looking around)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JACK (CONT'D)

You share this place with your mother?

Liberace pours himself a glass of champagne.

LIBERACE

The old dear is in Milwaukee, visiting relatives.

JACK

Moms, huh? Mine's gonna be heartbroken. She's got such a thing for you. Wonder how they'll take it, all those ladies, all those crushes when they find out you're a-

LIBERACE

You can quit humming, I know this tune. I believe it's called "shakedown."

*
*

JACK

Sid Hudgens, Hush-Hush magazine. He's outside, following me around for a story. It's up to you what kind of story he writes.

LIBERACE

I had wondered what you'd done to win all those headlines. Silly me thinking it was good old fashioned police work. But I am just a simple boy from Milwaukee.

Jack smiles at the dig.

JACK

I don't deal the cards, I just play them. Now what's it going to be?

Off Liberace, knowing he's cooked ...

EXT. MANSION - DAY

SID HUDGENS - late 40s, an avatar of pure sleaze stands near Jack's car as Jack comes out of the mansion.

JACK

He'll talk.

SID

Bonnaroo, Jackie-boy. He's our ticket into the heart of homo Hollywood.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

SID (CONT'D)

Hush-Hush'll name every sword-swallower and carpet connoisseur in Tinseltown. I'm talking special issue.

JACK

("whatever")

That's great, Sid.

Bobby comes from around the corner of the house. As he approaches:

SID

Look at this goldmine. Hung like a horse and pads his basket on top. Queerbait supreme.

(to Bobby)

Have fun?

BOBBY

Ugh. That was a money job all the way. Speaking of -

He rubs his fingers together like "pay up."

*

SID

I'm tapped. Come by the office later.

*

*

JACK

Forget my envelope too?

SID

Hey, honest mistake. We all make them.

*

*

There's a double-meaning to this, and Jack knows what it is even if we don't. The scene's interrupted by the bark of Jack's car radio:

DISPATCH (O.S.)

All units we've got a 10-33 - all hands situation. Report to Hollywood Division.

Jack gets in his car double-time - for all this scummy shit he's still a cop.

JACK

Later, Sid.

Jack peels out ...

EXT. THE VISTA - DAY

Crime scene. Uniformed officers scramble. The donut truck driver sits on the curb, ICE PACK on his head. PARAMEDICS strap Haney - unconscious - to a GURNEY.

Bud enters the crime scene, heads towards his partner DICK STENSLAND - early 50s, a good cop once, now limping towards retirement. They have a gruff mentor-mentee rapport. *

BUD
How's Haney? *

STENSLAND
If he owes you money, I'd go collect. *

He takes in the spritz of blood on Bud's tie, his re-busted knuckles. *

STENSLAND (CONT'D)
You gonna keep up your one-man-crusade on woman beaters, ought to get yourself a pair of brass knucks. *

BUD
I like to feel it. *

Stensland pulls a flask from his pocket and takes a jolt as the ambulance pulls away from the scene. *

BUD (CONT'D)
Jesus, Stens. We've got an officer down, that means brass is en route.

STENSLAND
Brass isn't coming here, we're going to them. Station-wide meeting in thirty. Anyhow six months from now either way I'm on a beach.

BUD
Yeah, but if they take your pension, you'll be coming to me for handouts.

STENSLAND
I'll have earned them, too.

They reach the wreck. There's a CROWBAR leaning against the car.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

STENSLAND (CONT'D)

Witnesses say Haney wanted the
shooter to open the trunk. Car
matches description of the Hancock
Park Peeper.

BUD

So maybe Haney found him.

Bud picks up the crowbar as they head to the trunk.

STENSLAND

Nix. Peepers are weak sisters, not
cop-killers.

Bud pops the trunk, one clean motion.

SEE two rubber clown masks, a couple of SAWN-OFF SHOTGUNS.

BUD

What about stick-up artists?

Off the clown masks ...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - DAY

The station house, squad cars crowded out front.

INT. HALLWAY. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - NIGHT

Hollywood division buzzes, crowded with cops in and out of
uniform, gathered in clumps, all talking. Everyone keyed up,
worried about Haney, thirsting for revenge. Exley stands
apart.

BUD (O.C.)

Ed.

Bud, with Stensland, joins Exley. Bud and Exley shake hands.
Stensland glares at Exley, keeps walking.

EXLEY

Bud. Detective suits you.

BUD

Thanks.

He notices Stensland is still going.

BUD (CONT'D)

(to Exley)

Let's get this guy.

He follows Stensland ...

INT. BRIEFING ROOM. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - MOMENTS LATER

Bud catches up with Stensland at the COFFEE MACHINE.

BUD
What was that?

STENSLAND
That rich kid puke thinks he walks
on water. Jesus is risen, and this
time he's a shitbird.

BUD
I was at the academy with him.
Scary smart.

STENSLAND
Thinks he's better than the rest of
us. Means you can't trust him.
(looking across the room)
Here comes Dudley.

*
*

CAPTAIN DUDLEY SMITH, 50s, the original kindly Irish cop,
smart and charming, walks in with BREUNING and CARLISLE, a
Mutt and Jeff pair of hardened detectives. (n.b. - the three
wear numbered tie pins: Breuning a 4, Carlisle a 5, Dudley an
8 -- the number of men they've killed in the line of duty).

CARLISLE
Captain's here. Listen up.

The men fall to order quickly as Dudley takes to the podium.
SEE Exley near the front, Bud and Stensland near the back.

DUDLEY
I must begin this conclave with
some sorry news. Officer Marvin
Haney passed at Queen of Angels
some fifteen minutes ago.

Dudley lets this wash over the room. Exley looks around, sees
it hitting his fellow officers.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)
(checking notes)
Running the plates of the killer's
car, we got the name Lester
Weiskopf. Witnesses ID'd him from
mug-shots, confirming Weiskopf is
our man.

He holds up a MUG-SHOT of Weiskopf.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

He did a year in Victorville for hot checks. Weapons and masks found in his car suggest an armed robbery connection - so far no reports matching that MO have been found.

SEE Exley - something in this gives him an idea. Behind him, Jack slips into the meeting.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

We have units watching his apartment, little chance he'll show up there. Employment record is sporadic, he's occasionally made his trade as a jazz saxophonist. Jack Vincennes?

Playing off like he didn't just slip in:

JACK

Captain.

DUDLEY

If I recall, you once arrested Charlie Parker. I presume you still have contacts in that particular demimonde?

JACK

On it.

DUDLEY

Everyone else, see your lieutenants for your assignments. Gentlemen, Chief Parker spoke to Haney's widow at the hospital. A fine Christian woman, she begged the Chief that we show mercy to her husband's killer, that we do our best to bring him to justice alive. A fine Christian sentiment for a widow to have. We in this room are not widows. We are not merciful. We are policemen, and when one of us is struck, we rise as one.

SEE Bud and Stensland out for blood, Jack surprised that he's moved.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

We will find Les Weiskopf, and we will avenge our fallen brother. By whatever force you deem necessary. Do you agree?

(CONTINUED)

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CONTINUED: (2)

The ragged CHEER that rises up is all the answer he needs.
Off Exley, determined to be the man who catches Weiskopf ...

SMASH OUT:

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

SMASH IN:

INT. HALLWAY. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - DAY

Men spill out into the hallway with their assignments. Bud waits for Stensland outside a LIEUTENANT'S OFFICE. Exley passes him.

BUD

What do they have you doing?

Exley barely slows down.

EXLEY

Witness statement rechecks. Excuse me, I want to get them done as soon as possible.

BUD

Good luck.

Exley gives him a nod, double-times it out. Stensland exits the lieutenant's office.

BUD (CONT'D)

What's our move?

STENSLAND

Snitch rousts. I got a guy who knows the underworld, and he's hungry too. You got cash?
(off Bud's "no" face)
Always keep your snitch fund green.

Bud nods "lesson learned" as they head out.

INT. MOVIE STUDIO - DAY

LYNN BRACKEN - early 30s, Veronica Lake in a gorgeous dress - sits on a velvet couch, lights a cigarette. She smiles - pure vamp.

LYNN

We've all got needs. Air. Something to eat, something to drink, someplace to hide from the rain. Get all that and you'll be alive, all right - like a potted plant. But you're no azalea. You're a man. You want to do more than survive. You want to live. You need a little something to put rockets in your blood. I can give you that.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LYNN (CONT'D)
Rockets all night long. But I need something too. I need that no-good cheating son of a bitch dead. That's what I need. So. Wanna trade?

She smolders for a hot beat - then gives an aw-shucks grin. A whole different woman now:

LYNN (CONT'D)
Scene.

SEE Lynn's audience: a sloppy middle-age horn-dog PRODUCER and a bored ASSISTANT (a woman in cat-eye glasses) reading off of some SIDES.

PRODUCER
Dynamite ... Lynn, was it?

She puts the still-burning prop cigarette into an ash tray.

LYNN
Lynn Bracken.

PRODUCER
Lynn, that was nitroglycerine. Genuine TNT.

He scans her HEAD SHOT and RESUME.

PRODUCER (CONT'D)
Not much on the resume side ...

LYNN
I played the Sleeping Princess on Dream-a-Dreamland Hour.

PRODUCER
You're hungry. I like that. This role, it needs to sizzle. You sizzle, right?

LYNN
I like to think so.

PRODUCER
Dynamite.
(to his assistant)
Run down to the commissary and grab me a corned beef on rye, huh?

The assistant knows the drill. She gives Lynn a knowing look as she heads out the door. Lynn's internal sirens go AHOOGA.

(CONTINUED)

PRODUCER (CONT'D)
Great read, Lynn. But an audition,
it's not enough. I need to see
more. See if you're really right
for this part.

The producer moves over to the couch. Lynn scootches away.

PRODUCER (CONT'D)
Come on doll. It's like you said. I
have needs. You have needs.

LYNN
It's a script ... you wrote it -

He leans into her. She pushes back - but he's too big.

LYNN (CONT'D)
No. Please.

PRODUCER
Come on show me rockets -

He jams a hand between her legs. Her hand flails. She reaches
for the prop cigarette, JAMS it in his face. He YELLS. Grabs
his face. Lynn gets free of him and heads out the door at
speed.

INT. HALLWAY. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

A dozen ACTRESSES - all the same type as Lynn, all dressed as
femme fatales - sit in a row, SIDES in their hands, looking
at her with bored disinterest. Lynn walks fast past them,
holding back tears.

INT. LOBBY. STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

Lynn walks towards the door to the studio lot. The assistant,
carrying a waxpaper-wrapped sandwich, comes the other
direction. She smirks at Lynn. Lynn slaps the sandwich from
her hand.

LYNN
You goddamn traitor.

Lynn walks away, feeling no better for the outburst ...

EXT. HUSH-HUSH MAGAZINE - EVENING

Establishing - a run-down section of downtown, bathed in
shadows from the setting sun. A neon eyeball flickers and
glows from one window, the words HUSH-HUSH above and below.

INT. HUSH-HUSH - EVENING

A cramped magazine office. Piles of HUSH-HUSH abound. FRAMED COVERS on the walls. TYPING from a nearby office.

Jack enters, casual, he's been here plenty. He pauses at one framed cover.

JACK'S POV: the Hush-Hush cover, a head-shot of Jack next to a photo of him on a stretcher, shot in the chest.

HEADLINE: DOPE CRUSADER WOUNDED IN SHOOT-OUT. *

He takes it in, roiling emotions inside, none of them good.

Jack follows the sound of typing to JUNE CHRISTMAN - mid-30s, black, smart, trying to do good in a bad world.

JUNE

Well if it isn't the Big V, scourge of hopheads, perverts and Hollywood sleaze. Hey Jack.

JACK

Hey June. What's new?

JUNE

(re: her typewriter)

Mickey Cohen's got a new cellmate in McNeil. He got the guards to sneak in Mickey Junior.

JACK

His bulldog?

JUNE

It's good to be the head of the LA mob, even in prison. Sid's in his office.

JACK

I'm here to see you. You like jazz, don't you? Ever hear of a guy named Lester Weiskopf?

JUNE

Les Weiskopf. Alto sax, played with Chet Baker for a bit. Didn't have the chops to keep up.

JACK

We like him for shooting Haney.

JUNE

That on the record?

(CONTINUED)

JACK
Not yet. If you were looking for
him, where would you go?

Nothing free in this life:

JUNE
The story, exclusive. Beginning to
end. You talk to me and me alone.

JACK
Deal.

SID (O.C.)
That Jack Vincennes I hear?

Sid enters, a couple of ENVELOPES in hand.

SID (CONT'D)
Jackie! What's the skinny on the
cop-killer?

June rises, grabs her purse.

JUNE
You've been beat to the punch, Sid.
(to Jack)
You don't mind going south of
Jefferson with me?

Sid sees the sparks between them, feels the need to assert
himself.

SID
Darktown. Beware the jungle
rhythms, Jackie.

He holds out the two envelopes.

SID (CONT'D)
For the Liberace shakedown. The
skinny one's for Bobby - I was
supposed to rendezvous with him
later, but I'm in the weeds with
this pinko white slaver story.

JACK
I'm looking for a cop-killer.

SID
So take it to him when you're done.

Sid keeps holding out the envelopes. It's a power move. After
a beat, Jack takes the envelopes.

(CONTINUED)

JACK
Sure thing.

Sid smiles - "I own you" spelled with teeth.

Off Jack, his smile hollow ...

INT. HALLWAY. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - DAY

Dudley walks down a hallway with Breuning and Carlisle. Exley catches up with them, a FOLDER in his hand.

EXLEY
Captain Smith.

DUDLEY
Sergeant Exley. Shouldn't you be knocking on doors?

EXLEY
I ran my list already. Then I followed a hunch. Weiskopf had a stick-up partner - the second clown mask. I figure he met him in prison.

DUDLEY
Do you believe we aren't already following up Weiskopf's jailhouse associates?

This is Exley's moment, and he delivers:

EXLEY
Of course, sir. But I figured, Weiskopf doesn't have a stick-up record - he'd need his partner to show him the ropes. The partner's probably white. Convicts stick to their own. And I figure Weiskopf met his partner on the work floor. Long hours, lots of time to talk. I had Victorville pull the sheets of anybody white, convicted of armed robbery, who worked in the laundry with Weiskopf and was recently released.

Exley shows him the file for PERCY HASKINS - late 40s, a big, burly man with crazy eyes.

EXLEY (CONT'D)
One name. Percy Haskins. Three collars, all for stick-ups.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Dudley looks over the file, hands it to Breuning.

DUDLEY

Follow up on this while I have a word with our eager young colleague.

The two leave, leaving Dudley and Exley.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

As a patrol officer I watched your esteemed father investigate the Dr. Frankenstein killer. He was masterful, and he's taught you well.

EXLEY

Thank you, sir. I saw an opportunity to help catch Haney's killer and I took it.

DUDLEY

What you saw, lad, was an opportunity to impress me. I've seen your application for the position in homicide. You might as well know you won't be receiving the promotion.

Exley didn't expect this reaction at all.

EXLEY

Sir, I scored first on the lieutenant's exam -

DUDLEY

Would you be willing to plant evidence on a suspect you knew to be guilty in order to ensure an indictment?

EXLEY

What? No.

DUDLEY

Would you be willing to shoot an armed robber in the back to offset the chance that they might use flaws in the legal system and go free?

EXLEY

No.

(CONTINUED)

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

EXLEY
No.

DUDLEY
Intelligence is all well and good.
But the detective's bureau requires
men of action.

Off Exley, crushed, holding it all inside ...

EXT. THE STRIP - NIGHT

JOHNNY STOMPANATO - a handsome mob killer in a bespoke but
bedraggled suit - walks down the strip, eyes a passing woman,
smiles - and then the smile drops when he sees Bud and
Stensland leaning against a gorgeous CADILLAC. As he
approaches:

STENSLAND
(to Bud)
Johnny here's one of my best
snitches, but he requires a soft
touch.

BUD
("soft touch?")
He's a goddamn hired killer.

STENSLAND
Hey, if snitches were good people,
they wouldn't know anything to
snitch.
(calling out)
Johnny Stompanato. Mickey C let you
keep his car while he's on the
inside? True that it's bulletproof?

STOMPANATO
Nobody's tried to shoot me yet.

STENSLAND
My partner, Bud White.

Stompanato puts out a hand to shake. Bud, hands at his sides,
glares. Stompanato pulls back his hand, makes a mock-scared
face.

STOMPANATO
Play nice, we're all white men
here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BUD

That right, greaseball?

STENSLAND

(to Stompanato)

With Mickey C on the inside, you're back to home manicures and pressing your own pants. Wanna make a quick forty?

STOMPANATO

Does Lana Turner have a velvet snatch?

Stensland pulls out a couple of TWENTIES. Stompanato takes them.

BUD

Looking for a stick-up team.
Shotguns. Clown masks.

That last bit hinks Stompanato.

STOMPANATO

Clown masks? Empty your pockets, detectives. This one's worth it. LAPD's not the only people looking for these clowns.

Off Bud and Stensland, what the fuck is he talking about?

SMASH OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SMASH IN:

EXT. DOWN BEAT - NIGHT

Central Avenue, L.A.'s jazz corridor, and the cultural heart of black Los Angeles. The crowd is well dressed and out for a good time.

INT. DOWN BEAT - NIGHT

DEXTER GORDON and his band cook onstage.

The Down Beat is small and lively. It's a hot scene.

SEE couples getting cozy, people digging the music.

Jack and June sit at the bar, taking it in. She's drinking a sidecar, Jack's got club soda on the rocks.

JUNE

(re: the drummer)

Archie Cummings. He's played with Weiskopf, they're close.

They watch the band go for a beat. June turns to Jack.

JUNE (CONT'D)

Can I ask you something? Off the record. Why do you do those things you do with Sid?

Jack stays smooth even though the question digs at him.

JACK

I need money same as everybody.

JUNE

You're a detective, plus you're technical advisor on ... what's the show?

JACK

Badge of Honor.

JUNE

Badge of Honor. That's two incomes already. You dress nice, but not clotheshorse nice. Where's the money go?

*

JACK

I owe somebody.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNE

You got bookies?

*

*

JACK

Gambling's strictly from hunger
unless you're the house.

*

JUNE

So what, then?

*

*

JACK

(sad smile)

I got a debt to pay, leave it at
that.

*

*

*

*

He means more than money, that's clear. June knows when a
trail's run cold.

*

*

JUNE

Leave it at that.

*

*

JACK

What about you? You like digging in
the dirt for Sid?

JUNE

Sid's a tool. I use him.

(off his look)

That Silver Lake scrape job clinic,
the one killing women with dirty
surgical tools? I exposed it, got
it shut down. The one up on 6th
street, the clean one? That one
stays secret.

JACK

That's why you're a reporter, not
why you work at Hush-Hush.

JUNE

You see any of the dailies lined up
to hire a colored woman? Sid's no
member of the NAACP. But he loves
dirt more than he hates black folk.
As long as I get him his "prime
sinuendo," I have a place to write.
I get to keep my pole in the water.
So when some big fish comes down
the stream, I'll be there to catch
it.

JACK

I bet you will.

(CONTINUED)

They sit in the moment - it's a good one. The band wraps up its number. The crowd CLAPS. The moment ends.

The band takes five.

JACK (CONT'D)
Let's get to work.

EXT. ALLEY. DOWN BEAT - NIGHT

Archie - birth-of-cool black man, mid-20s - along with a couple of BAND MEMBERS, pass around a joint.

JACK
Great set, fellahs.

Jack and June come out of the shadows. Jack plucks the joint from Archie's mouth, his badge visible on his belt.

JACK (CONT'D)
Got something on your face there,
Archie. Looks like felony drug
possession.
(to the others)
Go practice your scales.

The rest of the band heads back inside. Archie looks to June.

ARCHIE
You helping the police now?

JUNE
He's looking for a killer, Archie.
Now tell the man what he wants to
know and we're on our way.

JACK
Since you're a friend of June's,
help us out and I'll give this
back.

He gestures with the joint.

JUNE
That reedman you hang with, Les
Weiskopf. Jack here needs to find
him.

ARCHIE
(to Jack)
Not because you threatened me. Not
because of June. I'll tell you
because Les is straight trash.

JACK
Thought you were tight.

ARCHIE
The spike got him. Got him so he
can't play worth a damn anymore.

JACK
He's a junkie? That's good, Archie.
Real good. So tell me where he goes
to score and you can get back to
the stage.

ARCHIE
He likes to fix with some high
class fiends over at the
Metaphysical Bookstore on 6th
street. It's all I know. If I'm
lying, I'm dying.

Jack hands Archie back the joint.

JACK
Always nice to meet a concerned
citizen.

They leave Archie to his joint.

EXT. DOWN BEAT CLUB - MOMENTS LATER

Jack and June exit the alley.

JACK
I've got to report this in at the
station. Gonna need some back-up to
raid a dope den.

JUNE
I'll stay for the next set, catch a
cab later. Don't you forget -

JACK
The story is yours.

JUNE
The story is mine. Good night,
Jack.

They lock eyes, something there, then Jack turns to go.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - NIGHT

Establishing.

INT. HALLWAY. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - NIGHT

Exley, filling out paperwork, sees Bud and Stensland heading towards the briefing room, looking like they've got news.

INT. BRIEFING ROOM. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - MOMENTS LATER

Bud and Stensland join Dudley and Jack.

DUDLEY

Ah, welcome. Jack was just informing me that our cop killer is a narcotics enthusiast.

BUD

That fits with what we got. *

STENSLAND

My snitch says guys with clown masks and shotguns took down a heroin deal in Griffith Park two nights ago. Got away with 25 pounds of uncut horse. *

JACK

That's a quarter-million bucks on the street, easy. *

DUDLEY

A haul like that would be cause for a celebration. *

JACK

I have the shooting gallery where Weiskopf goes to score. Some weirdo bookstore downtown.

STENSLAND

He's sitting on that much H, scoring is the last thing he needs to do.

JACK

Junkies have tribes. He fixes there often, good chance someone there will know where he's hiding.

BUD

Let's bust it up.

DUDLEY

Our young friend here is eager to move from conversation to his forte, violence.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's a really nice way of calling Bud dumb, but it stings anyway.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)
A narco raid, Jack. Does it make you feel young again?

Jack smiles, uneasy.

STENSLAND
Three of us versus lord knows how many jumpy needle freaks. We could use more muscle. Where's Breuning and Carlisle?

*
*

DUDLEY
They're following up on a separate lead as we speak. We'll have to recruit someone else.

*
*
*
*

Bud sees Exley in the hallway.

BUD
What about Exley?

STENSLAND
I said muscle.

BUD
("cut it out")
Stens.

DUDLEY
Edmund, will you join us?

Exley enters, unsure what's happening.

DUDLEY (CONT'D)
Despite my earlier admonition, do you still wish to be helpful?

*
*

EXLEY
Yes sir.

Off Exley, victorious at last ...

EXT. PERCY HASKIN'S FLOPHOUSE - NIGHT

Carlisle drives. Breuning sits shotgun.

*

SEE the file Exley gave him in his hands, Percy Haskins' mug shot on top.

*
*

They pull up to a Bunker Hill efficiency apartment house, a couple of stewbums out front. A car pulls up.

*
*

INT. PERCY HASKIN'S FLOPHOUSE - NIGHT

SEE some LOOSE CASH on top of a familiar Tijuana Bible ("WHEN HUBBY'S AWAY").

SEE a row of weapons - everything from a SHOTGUN to a MACHETE - lined up against one wall.

Big, bad PERCY HASKINS unwraps a roll of BENZEDRINE, pops a handful, chases it with whiskey. He's wired.

Percy drops a needle on the record player. "Shotgun Boogie" by Tennessee Ernie Ford scratches out. Percy digs it. Percy gets down. He grabs a shotgun for a dance partner.

The door KICKS IN. Breuning and Carlisle come in, pistols out.

CARLISLE

LAPD. Drop the gun, asshole.

Percy wants a brawl. He swings the shotgun baseball-bat style. It's a knock-down drag-out - Breuning and Carlisle swing lead-filled BEAVERTAIL SAPS. Percy bites. The cops stomp. They swing their saps. Percy grins broken teeth and blood. They keep swinging. He goes down. One gets on top, slaps on cuffs.

PERCY

Never had such fun in my life.

Off his bloody grin ...

EXT. LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

Neon and streetlights light up the night as a two-car caravan (Exley's PATROL CAR and Stensland's PROWLER) move through the city.

INT. PATROL CAR - CONTINUOUS

Exley drives, Jack sits shotgun.

Jack's POV: Exley's hands on the wheel tremble.

JACK

To these guys, we're the bogeyman.
They're the ones scared of us.

EXLEY

You were shot in a narco raid,
weren't you?

JACK

You've heard of me, huh?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXLEY

I heard you made a lot of good collars in narco. Then you left when you were shot. And I heard you spend your time now taking payoffs from Hush-Hush magazine.

JACK

So this is why nobody likes you.

EXLEY

Payoffs and shortcuts aren't for me.

JACK

So you're ambitious and smart. But not that smart.

Exley smiles like "is that so"? Jack figures what the hell, give this kid some wisdom.

JACK (CONT'D)

Be a team player your whole life - always be on time, keep your nose clean, work late - and you'll get promoted all the way up to the job of holding the coat of somebody who climbed right over you to get the top. You want to move the world, you've got to find a lever. I know what my levers are. Do you know yours?

*

Off Exley, listening despite himself ...

EXT. METAPHYSICAL BOOKSTORE - NIGHT

A commercial section of downtown, mostly dead at night. The bookstore is closed. Jack, Exley, Bud and Stensland stand in front, out of sight of anyone who might be inside.

JACK

I'll take the front door.

(to Bud and Stens)

You go in the back and flush everyone to me. Gary Cooper here will catch any runoff. I'll listen for your signal, two minutes.

Bud and Stensland nod, head around the side -

EXT. BACK. METAPHYSICAL BOOKSTORE - CONTINUOUS

- they hug the wall to avoid windows as they move to the back of the store.

(CONTINUED)

Bud raises his foot to kick in the door -

Just before Bud kicks the door, it swings open - a JUNKIE who was on his way outside and Bud eye-to-eye for a confused beat.

JUNKIE
Raid!

The junkie turns to run back inside. Bud shoves the guy down and moves past him into the bookstore. Stensland kicks the junkie in the ass, getting him to crawl after Bud.

EXT. FRONT. METAPHYSICAL BOOKSTORE - CONTINUOUS

Jack sees inside it's all gone to hell. He pulls his gun. Looks back to Exley, still bad nerves, gun in hand.

JACK
Anybody comes out, shoot them.
Don't shoot me.

He kicks in the door -

INT. METAPHYSICAL BOOKSTORE - CONTINUOUS

Jack's face to face with a rush of junkies trying to escape the oncoming Bud. One makes to push past him, Jack BRAINS him with his pistol. The junkie drops, cradling his head in pain.

From the back, Bud and Stensland herd their junkie in with the crowd.

BUD
It's clear.

Jack smiles. What a rush.

INT. METAPHYSICAL BOOKSTORE - LATER

Six high-class junkies in different states of consciousness sit on the main floor of the bookstore. There's a pile of HEROIN PARAPHERNALIA and a couple of BALLOONS OF HEROIN in a pile on a table.

INTERCUT WITH Exley, watching from outside.

STENSLAND
Okay, who's in charge?

JACK'S POV: one of the junkie's eyes dart over to DAMONE, a sharp-dressed mid-forties guy on a slight nod.

JACK
Him.

(CONTINUED)

STENSLAND
Where's Les Weiskopf?

DAMONE
How should I know?

Stensland nods to Bud. Bud cuffs Damone. Stensland wanted more.

DAMONE (CONT'D)
Think you're bad, huh?

STENSLAND
(to Damone)
Hey, didn't I book you for ag-
assault last year for burning your
girlfriend?

Not bullshitting this time:

DAMONE
What? No.

STENSLAND
I did. You put your girlfriend in
the hospital.

Bud focuses on Damone now. SEE his fists clench.

DAMONE
Man you got me mixed up -

STENSLAND
You took an iron to that pretty
girl. Don't you lie to us.

DAMONE
You're the one lying -

Bud lifts Damone in the air, crashes him to the ground.
Junkies scatter. Bud follows Damone to the floor. He punches
him, doesn't notice how it tears back open his knuckles. He
puts his pistol next to Damone's head. *
*
*

GUNSHOT.

Bud puts a bullet through the floor - the pistol next to
Damone's ear. Damone screams in pain from the sound, claps a
hand to his ear.

Outside, Exley watches in horror as Bud presses the gun to
Damone's forehead.

BUD
Next one goes in your head.

(CONTINUED)

JACK
(sotto to Stensland)
Put a leash on your partner.

Stensland gives him a "wait" gesture.

One of the junkies - MARVELLE, black, early 20s, not as far gone as some of the others - takes this opportunity to slip out a side door. Outside, Exley sees her go, moves to follow.

END INTERCUT. *

Inside, Bud holds the gun to Damone's head. *

DAMONE
Please I don't know I never hurt
anybody please - *

JACK
White, he doesn't know. *

Bud holds the rage a beat more. Sees the fear - the truth -
in Damone's face. He lowers his gun. *

EXT. METAPHYSICAL BOOKSTORE - LATER *

Jack and Stensland walk out of the bookstore. Stensland takes
out his flask, offers Jack a sip. Jack waves it off. *

JACK
Kid's an A-bomb.

STENSLAND
Some day he'll learn how to turn it
on and off himself. Until then,
sometimes I got to lead the way.

Bud comes out the door, calmer now. *

BUD
He's telling the truth. No idea
where Weiskopf is. So now what? *

STENSLAND
Back to the station, catch a new
lead. *

Jack thinks of something, looks around.

JACK
Where's Exley?
(beat)
He was my ride.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Marvelle walks fast as she can, knowing running would make her look suspicious. She turns a corner, looks behind her, relaxes a bit.

EXLEY (O.C.)

Excuse me, miss.

She turns to see Exley standing by his patrol car.

MARVELLE

Oh Lord. Don't take me back there.

EXLEY

I just want to talk to you.

MARVELLE

(defiant)

Talk? Like your friend in there.
That's how you people talk. With
fists and guns.

Exley reads her, knows what she needs. Like his father taught him. He's softer now when he speaks.

EXLEY

What the detective did in there was
wrong. It's not the kind of
policeman I am.

*

MARVELLE

The ones who aren't cover up for
the ones who are.

EXLEY

You're right. But we've all got bad
friends. Like your friend Les.

She's not ready to talk about Les. He recalibrates.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

What's your name?

MARVELLE

Marvelle.

EXLEY

Marvelle, you've been romantically
attached to Les in the past,
haven't you?

MARVELLE

How did you know -?

(CONTINUED)

He smiles, abashed schoolboy charming now:

EXLEY
Honestly? I guessed. Marvelle, I don't care. I don't care about your narcotics habit, I don't care that you've maybe got a couple of warrants. All I care about is absolute justice.

For Marvelle, this is a hilarious thing for a cop to say.

MARVELLE
Absolute justice. Even for cops like the ones back there?

EXLEY
(sincerely)
Yes. For all of us.

She still doesn't fully believe him. But she believes him enough. Exley figures it's time to strike. Still empathetic:

EXLEY (CONT'D)
Marvelle, Les Weiskopf shot and killed a man today.

MARVELLE
(heartbroken)
Oh Les ...

EXLEY
The man he shot was a policeman. You know Les can't run forever. Do you want it to be me who finds him? Or someone like those other policemen?

*
*

She breaks, gently.

MARVELLE
Les has a pad up on Delongpre. 122, above a luggage shop. That's where you'll find him.

INT. SQUAD CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Exley climbs into his squad car. The radio SQUAWKS.

DISPATCH (O.C.)
We've got a 11-23 for Sergeant Exley. Sergeant Exley, call in.

(CONTINUED)

L.A. Confidential "Pilot" third 12-15-17 41.
CONTINUED:

Exley pulls a wire. The radio goes dead. He drives away.

SMASH OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. THE APPLE PAN - NIGHT

A U-shaped counter, around a grill. It's crowded, CUSTOMERS of all types eating burgers and fries.

Lynn - more comfortable in a plain dress, femme fatale make-up gone - sits with Bobby at the counter, sharing a cone of fries.

LYNN

So I ...

She uses a fry to mime putting a cigarette out on Bobby's face.

BOBBY

That's one way to turn down a part.

LYNN

I would have hated myself. I hate myself anyway, for not warning the other girls, for not just shutting up - I mean, do I want to be an actress or not?

BOBBY

How long have I known you? Five years? You can't get cast, and it's not because you don't have the looks. Or the talent. It's because you don't want it.

LYNN

I don't?

BOBBY

You don't want to be some director's pet monkey, doing what he wants, so he can throw you away when he's done. You can be the one with the power, the one with the money. Like me.

LYNN

Did I miss something? You, power and money?

BOBBY

Honey, I know the game is rigged. So I'm making up my own game. Getting paid. And nobody knows it, but I'm about to get paid a whole lot more.

(CONTINUED)

LYNN
Bobby, what are you into?

Bobby looks around - notices the OLD WOMAN at the stool next to him is eavesdropping.

BOBBY
Something very juicy. Come by
tonight, I'll tell you all about
it.

*

Off Lynn, intrigued ...

*

EXT. CRASH PAD - NIGHT

Exley rolls to a stop on the a street of shops with
apartments on the second floor.

EXLEY'S POV: A light burns in a second-floor window.

INT. STAIRCASE. CRASH PAD - NIGHT

Exley cracks open the door to a staircase. Narrow steps to a
single door. A slash of light from the crack under the door
at the top of the steps.

Exley pulls his gun. His hand trembles as he moves up the
steps. He gets to the door. Closes his eyes, takes a deep
breath. He KICKS the door -

INT. CRASH PAD - CONTINUOUS

He comes through gun first.

EXLEY
LAPD!

EXLEY'S POV: Weiskopf slumped in a chair, a needle in his arm
- dead. The crash pad is bare bones - ash tray, chair, cot,
table with a hotplate and a pistol.

Exley lowers his gun. The moment over. He puts his gun away.
He walks to Weiskopf's corpse. Feels his neck for a pulse.

Nothing.

Exley turns to go. Stops. Thinks.

EXLEY'S POV: a pistol on the table.

EXLEY'S POV: the needle dangling out of Weiskopf's arm.

He plucks the needle from Weiskopf's arm.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He steps back five paces, turns - one moment of doubt - he conquers it. He SHOOTS Weiskopf's corpse BANG BANG BANG.

INT. CRASH PAD - LATER

SEE Weiskopf's corpse now splayed dead on his back.

SEE a tight pattern of BULLET HOLES in his chest. SEE bullet holes in the wall and the door. SEE A PISTOL next to Weiskopf's dead hand.

Cops swarm the scene. Exley stands with Dudley.

EXLEY

... I decided to check on the tip myself -

DUDLEY

Why didn't you wait for the detectives?

EXLEY

Time was of the essence. I intended to call dispatch on my way here, but my radio was on the fritz. I went inside to make sure Weiskopf was here. He must have heard me coming. He opened fire. I kicked in the door, returned fire, and killed him.

ASSISTANT CHIEF THAD GREENE - imperious in his uniform - enters, a LACKEY trailing.

DUDLEY

Look alive, lad.
(to Green)
Sir.

THAD GREENE

Hello, Dudley. Is this the man of the hour?

DUDLEY

Assistant Chief Thad Greene, I'd like you to meet Sergeant Edmund Exley.

THAD GREENE

Your father and I worked cases together years ago. I know he thinks highly of you, and it seems he was correct to do so.

As they shake hands:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXLEY

Thank you sir.

THAD GREENE

Losing an officer is a blow. Haney was a good man. This is a story that needed a happy ending. I can tell you, Chief Parker is delighted that justice was served for Marvin Haney. Not to mention, the department can use some good headlines.

EXLEY

May I suggest one, sir?

THAD GREENE

Please.

EXLEY

Hero Cop Makes Detective. I just closed the biggest homicide of the year and avenged a fallen officer. And I did score first on the lieutenant's exam last month.

Greene looks at Dudley for his thoughts.

DUDLEY

Sergeant Exley has proven himself tonight, wouldn't you say?

A lot of ways to read that. Exley wonders, does Dudley know?

THAD GREENE

There's press outside. Get cleaned up and pose for some pictures, Detective.

He offers his hand. Exley takes it. Such a good moment he can almost forget how he got here ...

SMASH OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

SMASH IN:

EXT. STASH HOUSE - NIGHT

Exley walks out into the night. There's more cops working the scene outside. REPORTERS (including JUNE and a Hush-Hush photographer) wait at a distance.

Jack sidles next to Exley, puts a friendly arm over his shoulder, uses it to steer him towards the press.

JACK

Don't slump your shoulders, you'll look weak. Push your ears forward and your chest out. Give them that hero pose.

EXLEY

What?

JACK

For the photos. The press is clamoring for you.

(quieter)

So you found your lever, huh kid? Don't worry. Nobody's gonna press too hard. The world needs more heros.

What's that mean? Does Jack know? Before Exley can react, they reach the press.

JACK (CONT'D)

Ed Exley here gunned down the killer of Marvin Haney. And here's the scoop - he's getting a bump to detective, and he's going to be my partner.

This last part is news to Ed. Jack, loving the spotlight, drops a movie star smile.

JACK (CONT'D)

Two hotshot cops for the price of one.

JUNE

So why'd Weiskopf shoot Haney?

JACK

That's tomorrow's story, June. Tonight it's all about a cop-killer brought to justice.

(CONTINUED)

JUNE

You promised me the whole story,
and I'm going to get it.

JACK

You will. And you get exclusive
first interview with hero cop Ed
Exley.

He poses with Exley. Flashbulbs POP. Jack's smooth, Exley
tries. *

EXT. BOBBY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

A bungalow in West Hollywood, nestled up against the hills.
It's late night, the streets are dead.

It's late. Jack is tired. Jack, Bobby's envelope in hand,
walks to the door- it's open a crack. MUSIC floats out- Chet
Baker's "My Funny Valentine," creepy in the dark.

JACK

Knock-knock. Bobby? I got your
payday.

He pushes the door open and comes in.

INT. HALLWAY. BOBBY'S BUNGALOW - NIGHT

Jack walks through the dark, following the music.

JACK

Bobby? If you've got company ...

He puts his hand on his gun. Doesn't pull it, but something's
wrong here ...

INT. BEDROOM. BOBBY'S BUNGALOW - CONTINUOUS

SEE blood on the walls. SEE a blurry shape that's not quite
human. Just the edges of it, for now.

SEE the horror on Jack's face.

The music ends. There's A RUSTLE from the closet. Jack draws
his gun, turns to face the closet, which pops open to reveal
Lynn Bracken armed with a fireplace poker. She swings. Jack
falls back to avoid it, points his gun.

LYNN'S POV: The badge on Jack's belt.

The fury drops from her face as she lowers the poker.

LYNN

Oh god, you're police.

(CONTINUED)

He stands up, his gun still on her.

JACK
I'm police. So who the hell are
you?

LYNN
My name's Lynn. Bobby was my
friend.

She looks past Jack to whatever's become of Bobby. Jack believes her, lowers his gun.

JACK
What are you doing here?

LYNN
He had a job for me, wouldn't say
what. I just got here. I was about
to call the police when I heard you
come in. *

He doesn't want to trust this woman, but he doesn't have a choice.

JACK
I'm not supposed to be here. You're
going to help me look for anything
with my name on it. Then later on
you're going to go to a payphone
and call in an anonymous tip. Trust
me, you don't want to be a part of
this.

LYNN
(unsure)
Okay.

Off Lynn, not feeling right about this ...

EXT. THE VICTORY MOTEL - DAWN

Out near the oil wells and not much else, the Victory Motel sits dead, boarded up, a victim of the freeways. Two cars parked out front. A third rolls into frame.

INT. THE VICTORY MOTEL - DAWN

Percy Haskins, his face a mask a bruises, sits handcuffed to a chair. The blood on his undershirt is mostly dried. Breuning and Stensland play cards in a corner. Carlisle sits apart, reading "WHEN HUBBY'S AWAY."

Dudley enters. The three cops give him nods.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DUDLEY

You must be Percy Haskins. I trust my men were only as cruel as you deserve.

PERCY

Think I can't handle a little strong-arm? Piss off.

DUDLEY

You and your now deceased partner Weiskopf stole a great deal of heroin - 25 pounds to be precise - from the Jack Whalen mob. It wasn't found in either Weiskopf's place or yours. It's in your best interest to tell me where exactly it is.

PERCY

Go to hell you mick son of a bitch.

Dudley's smile doesn't break, even when he pulls a knife and JAMS it into Percy's thigh.

Percy is tough - he only sort of screams. He struggles against his handcuffs.

DUDLEY

Careful now. That knife is in your artery, corking the wound shut. Now it's up to you whether the knife is removed in a hospital, or ...

He puts his hand back on the knife handle.

PERCY

Jesus. All right. Okay.

DUDLEY

Where is the heroin?

PERCY

I don't know. The guy who planned it -

DUDLEY

Weiskopf wasn't the plan's mastermind?

Shaking his head "no."

(CONTINUED)

PERCY

Me and Les were inside together. I'd told him about some heists I'd done, so he looked me up on the outside. Said he had a partner, knew about this dope deal that was ripe for being taken down.

DUDLEY

And who is this partner?

PERCY

I never saw him. He got the junk, me and Les got cash. Les kept a little for personal use, but that's it. I don't have the dope and I don't have the name. You got to believe me.

Still that same charming smile:

DUDLEY

You'll have to give me more than that. Search your mind. Any detail could prove illuminating.

PERCY

Weiskopf said his partner was going to sell the junk in the Chavez Ravine. He's got connections with the spic gangs down there.

DUDLEY

Anything else?

PERCY

Weiskopf's partner ... he's a cop.

Dudley looks back at Stensland. This is ... surprising.

PERCY (CONT'D)

That's all I know I swear.

Dudley looks in the man's face - believes him. So he pulls out the knife, does a matador twist to miss the ARTERIAL SPRAY. Percy screams. Dudley doesn't pay him another glance. Dudley motions to Stensland, who joins him.

Percy bleeds out slow in the b.g. as they talk.

DUDLEY

The Jack Whalen mob is offering a handsome reward for return of his merchandise.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DUDLEY (CONT'D)

Of course, if we keep it for ourselves, we'll profit all the more. That is the plan I favor.

STENSLAND

If we can find it.

DUDLEY

He gave us several avenues to explore. Such as, the mysterious partner is a policeman.

The statement hangs there. Dudley's eyes bore into Stensland.

STENSLAND

You don't think - it's not me, Dudley.

He glances back at Percy, still dying in the corner. He's scared of Dudley. Of course he is.

DUDLEY

No. You lack the ambition for such a grand enterprise.

STENSLAND

If this guy plans to sell the junk in the Chavez Ravine, I can use that. Me and Bud will start there.

DUDLEY

Do you trust your young partner?

STENSLAND

He's solid. And someday we'll have the talk. But I'll keep him in the dark for now.

*

Dudley looks over, sees that Percy has stopped moving.

DUDLEY

Grand. Now, lad, help these two dispose of this cumbersome piece of refuse.

Off Stensland, knowing he's made a deal with the devil ...

EXT. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - DAY

Exley, now in a detective's suit, stands on the steps next to Thad Greene. A small crowd of PHOTOGRAPHERS snap photos as Greene hands Exley his DETECTIVE BADGE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THAD GREENE

There is no greater way to honor one of our fallen than to bring his killer to justice. While I'm sure that more commendations are to come to Exley for his bravery, for now I'm proud to welcome him to the Detective's Bureau.

Close by, Haney's WIDOW, in black, dabs her face with a handkerchief, this ceremony bringing her no comfort.

EXLEY'S POV: Preston stands behind the photographers, beaming.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - LATER

The ceremony over, Exley and his father shake hands.

PRESTON

Son -

They're interrupted by Thad Greene.

THAD GREENE

Excuse me, Preston. Ed, no time to rest on laurels. Homicide called, you've got a body. Meet Detective Vincennes at this address.

He hands him a PIECE OF PAPER.

EXLEY

Thank you, sir.

Greene leaves.

EXLEY (CONT'D)

I should go -

PRESTON

I was wrong, Edmund. I misjudged you. You are a hero. And a detective. I'm proud of you.

Off Exley, wrestling with the lie that's given him everything he wants.

EXT. BOBBY'S BUNGALOW - DAY

It's a crime scene now. Jack's talking to a patrol officer by the front door.

FIND Bud standing at the edge of the yard.

(CONTINUED)

LYNN (O.S.)
Excuse me, officer.

BUD turns to see Lynn. They're both surprised by each other, the instant attraction.

BUD
Can I help you?

LYNN
I was a friend of Bobby's. It seems like there's something I could do.

He takes out a pad and pencil.

BUD
Let's start with your name.

LYNN
Lynn with two "n"s, Bracken, B-R-

As he starts to write, she notices his scabbed knuckles.

LYNN (CONT'D)
Does it hurt?

*

BUD
Huh?
(figures it out)
Oh. Not right now.

They both smile.

Jack looks over, sees Lynn talking to Bud. He double-times it over, worried what she might be telling Bud.

JACK
Hello, m'am. I'm primary on this case.
(to Bud)
I'll take it from here, thanks White.

He leads Lynn away. Bud watches, entranced.

Jack takes Lynn to the street, out of earshot.

JACK (CONT'D)
I thought we had an understanding.
I found you with the body, I could have brought you in.

Lynn has found her inner strength now.

(CONTINUED)

LYNN
But you didn't, because you weren't supposed to be there. How are you going to explain that now?

JACK
Nice play. So what now?

LYNN
We both know what Bobby was. I know how deeply the cops investigate "homo-cide." I won't let his case get buried.

JACK
So?

LYNN
So I'll help you hide your connection to Bobby. But you let me in. Let me know how the case is going. I can even help you investigate the parts you don't want other cops to know about.

Jack knows when he's beat.

JACK
All right. Deal.

Off Lynn, determined, strong ...

EXT. BOBBY'S BUNGALOW - LATER

Exley pulls up to the apartment. Jack's gone, but Bud's still there, standing with a couple patrol officers. June's at the front door, talking to a patrol officer blocking her path. Bud sees Exley coming.

BUD
Ed. Nice work last night.

Exley doesn't return the smile.

EXLEY
Les Weiskopf got what he deserved. Did the man you assaulted in the bookstore deserve it?

BUD
He beat up his girlfriend. You defend a guy like that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

EXLEY

I checked the records. Dick Stensland never arrested that man. Not for burning a woman, or for anything at all.

Ed keeps walking to the bungalow. He knows he's a hypocrite. Bud turns around, fists clench, what the hell was that?

At the door, June sees Exley coming.

JUNE

Lieutenant Exley, I was trying to tell this man I'm writing a story about you -

EXLEY

It's fine.

He walks in as the cop steps aside. June follows.

INT. BOBBY'S BUNGALOW - MOMENTS LATER

They pass a PATROL OFFICER leaning against a corner, handkerchief over his mouth, a face like he just puked or is about to puke.

Exley walks into the bedroom, sees Bobby on the floor, and freezes.

JACK

Hey there partner. Got yourself a weird one for your first case -

EXLEY'S POV: the horror that Bobby has been turned into. Dissected, put back together wrong, his head sewn into the center of his chest. Blackbird wings spread in full fan, sprouting from his sewn-shut eyes.

SEE catgut sewn into flesh.

SEE perfect square knots. We've seen them before.

JACK (CONT'D)

What?

EXLEY

Ornamental.

Off Exley, filled with horror and confusion ...

Begin montage ...

INT. HUSH-HUSH - DAY

June, back in the office, typing a storm.

SEE words being typed: A KILLER RETURNS?

JUNE (V.O.)

He didn't just kill his victims. He didn't just cut them up. He went for the triple crown of killing them, cutting them up, and putting them back together in a way that would make Picasso proud.

INT. DINER - DAY

Kathy and Bud sit at the counter of a diner. Kathy shovels in a bowl of chili as a WAITRESS sets a milk shake next to her cheeseburger.

JUNE (V.O.)

The papers called the killer Dr. Frankenstein. When it was all over, a part-time grip and full-time maniac named Loren Atherton confessed to a kill-crazy body count - six victims he could remember, plus a few he used for spare parts.

Bud is someplace else in his head. He drinks black coffee. His hand on the cup busted and bruised.

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

Jack takes the envelope Sid gave him. Writes TO THE SCOGGINS FAMILY on it.

JUNE (V.O.)

Hush-Hush exclusive - hero cop Ed Exley thinks the killing of local boy Bobby Inge resembles the Dr. Frankenstein killings to a "T".

EXT. SCOGGINS HOUSE - DAY

Jack runs up to a small house, drops the envelope in the mailbox and takes off before someone can see him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JUNE (V.O.)

Exley won't say why. But considering Ed's father - Preston Exley, legendary former cop, current real estate mogul - was the one who sent Atherton to the chair, we tend to take his word for it.

*

JUNE (V.O.)

So is Dr. Frankenstein back from the grave, eager to get back to work? Did Exley senior send the wrong man to his electric death? Or is Bobby Inge's killer a copy cat who really did his homework?

INT. OFFICE. HOLLYWOOD DIVISION - DAY

Exley stares at crime scene photos - both old and new. The knots. The cuts.

What's it all mean?

JUNE (V.O.)

Whatever the answer is, you'll get it here - off the record, on the QT, and very Hush-Hush.

END MONTAGE.

SMASH OUT:

END OF SHOW