

LOU GRANT

"Babies"

by

David Lloyd

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"Babies"

CAST

LOU GRANT.....	EDWARD ESNER	
CHARLIE HUME.....	MASON ADAMS	
JOE ROSSI.....	ROBERT WALDEN	
BILLIE NEWMAN.....	LINDA KELSEY	
ART DONOVAN.....	JACK BANNON	
ANIMAL.....	DARYL ANDERSON	
MRS. PYNCHON.....	NANCY MARCHAND	*
RAY McINTYRE.....		
KARLAN.....		*
DR. BROOKS DAVIDSON.....		
MRS. HATCH.....		
NURSE #1.....		
NURSE #2.....		
CLERK.....		
DRIVER.....		
CARL.....		
MARY.....		
RECEPTIONIST.....		
VICKY.....		*

"Babies"

SETS

EXTERIOR SETS:

DUSTY CALIFORNIA COUNTRY ROAD
PALOMINO MOTEL
SMALL ONE-STORY L.A. HOUSE

INTERIOR SETS:

KITCHEN
LIVING ROOM
COUNTY ADOPTION AGENCY
MRS. HATCH'S OFFICE
MCKENNA'S
DR. DAVIDSON'S OFFICE
HUME'S OFFICE
MRS. PYNCHON'S OFFICE
BILLIE'S APARTMENT
BILLIE'S KITCHEN
TRIB ELEVATOR
TRIB HALLWAY
LOU'S OFFICE
ROSSI'S CAR
MOTEL FRONT DESK
MOTEL ROOM
CITY ROOM
LOU'S HOUSE

*

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1. EXT. SMALL ONE-STORY LOS ANGELES HOUSE - NIGHT 1.

To establish.

2. INT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 2.

A young married couple are nervously awaiting someone. The wife, MARY, is drinking coffee and has been lighting and putting out cigarettes in fairly quick succession. The husband, CARL, is pacing. They react to the sound of a car pulling into the driveway outside.

Carl crosses quickly and peers secretively out from behind drawn curtains.

3. CARL'S POV 3.

The car, having pulled in the driveway, turns off its headlights but no one gets out.

4. EXT. THE HOUSE - NIGHT 4.

Sidedoor opens cautiously. Carl takes a step or two out into the moonlight and we can see him better. He is staring intently at the car.

CARL

Hello?

5. ANGLE - THE CAR 5.

The DRIVER opens the front door of the car and half stands so Carl can see him.

DRIVER

It's us...

CARL

(relieved)

Yeah, I thought so. About time.
Come on in...

The driver gets out and opens the back door of car. A NURSE gets out of back seat carrying bundle in her arms and hastens into house, followed by driver, with Carl last.

6. INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT 6.

Mary jumps up eagerly as the nurse enters and hands her the bundle.

MARY

Our baby.. Thank you. Thank you.

CONTINUED

6. CONTINUED

6.

The nurse hands the bundle to Mary, which we now can see is a tiny, newborn baby.

MARY (CONT'D)

Awww... look at him, Carl, look.

NURSE #1

Her.

MARY

Her?

NURSE #1

(nodding)

Her.

Mary digests this for a beat, then turns back to nuzzling the baby.

MARY

She's... beautiful.

7. INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

7.

Carl has taken a large amount of money, stops and turns to the driver.

CARL

What's going on? We were told it was going to be a boy.

*

DRIVER

You want us to take her back?

8. CARL'S POV

8.

Mary is totally wrapped up in the baby, cooing and beaming at her.

9. BACK TO SCENE

9.

CARL

We'll keep her.

Carl hands the driver the bundle of cash. The driver, counting money, crosses to door. The nurse crosses to join him, then turns at the door.

NURSE #1

Enjoy your baby.

Carl has crossed to join Mary in gazing adoringly down at baby. The nurse smiles faintly, then turns and follows driver out.

CUT TO:

10. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

10.

Lou is at his desk when Hume enters from his office and crosses to Lou, reading some copy.

HUME

You know... I find this story hard to believe.

LOU

(not looking up)

I can vouch that every word of it is accurate.

(looks up)

What story are you talking about?

*

*

Donovan joins them.

HUME

Billie's series on adoption. I can't believe these figures. Right now there are a hundred thousand babies in this country who are going unadopted. That's terrible.

*

*

*

*

*

LOU

Well I'm sure Billie didn't make that figure up.

HUME

Who are these babies?

LOU

More important: Where do they come from? Who are their fathers?

DONOVAN

Have you ever noticed -- he always looks at me when he says things like that...

Donovan turns and starts away. Rossi passes Donovan.

ROSSI

Anybody seen Billie?

11. Donovan shrugs and keeps going. Rossi joins Hume and Lou. 11.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

I need a phone number from Billie.

LOU

She's at the County Adoption agency.

ROSSI

But she's got the phone number of this girl.

(before they can react)

For my piece on girl gangs in East L.A. -- *

Lou shrugs. Impatient, Rossi turns and crosses to his desk.

HUME

The trouble with the kids today is that they don't have the patience we had. I remember waiting days and weeks on a story. *

LOU

Me, too. I'd often sit there waiting, for days on end, staring at that phone, sitting on a bar stool... We had what it took. *

12. ANGLE - ROSSI'S DESK 12.

Rossi sits at his desk and fidgets. We can see from his expression that he isn't going to wait for long.

CUT TO:

13. INT. COUNTY ADOPTION AGENCY OFFICE - DAY 13. *

Billie is present as MRS. HATCH, one of the senior employees, chats with VICKY, a very young and visibly pregnant girl. *

MRS. HATCH

That's good news, Vicky, as long as you're aware of the responsibilities this decision is going to put on you. *

VICKY

I know I said I wanted to give it up, but after carrying the baby for eight months, I just can't. *

(hopefully) *

Besides, Jimmy and I've been talking, and I think he might marry me. *

CONTINUED

13. CONTINUED

13 .

MRS. HATCH

Well, I wish you all the best.
Listen, I'll keep your file open
just in case you change your mind.

VICKY

No. I'm not going to change it.
I really think I'm making the right
decision.

14. She rises to go and Mrs. Hatch follows her to the door.

14.

MRS. HATCH

Good luck, dear. And when the baby
is born, be sure and bring him or
her by.

VICKY

(a little evasive)

Oh, sure. Listen, thanks for being
so understanding about this.

MRS. HATCH

(opening the door)

That's my job.

VICKY

Goodbye.

She exits.

BILLIE

It must really give you a good
feeling when that happens.

MRS. HATCH

If that's going to happen.

BILLIE

What do you mean?

MRS. HATCH

I just hope she's not selling that
baby on the black market.

BILLIE

Black market babies? That sounds
like some bad movie.

MRS. HATCH

She's a very troubled girl. And poor.
She's perfect prey for one of those
baby brokers.

CONTINUED

14. CONTINUED

14.

BILLIE

We're not talking about a legitimate third party adoption.

MRS. HATCH

Oh, no. There's nothing wrong with those.

BILLIE

How do you tell the difference between those and black market ones?

MRS. HATCH

The honest lawyer arranging an adoption will charge only a legitimate fee for his services. Five hundred dollars, say, or a thousand. Whatever his normal fee is. The shady ones charge many, many times that.

BILLIE

And I suppose people are desperate enough to pay it.

MRS. HATCH

You'd better believe it. I've heard of cases where people paid a hundred thousand dollars to "arrange" an adoption.

CUT TO:

15. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

15.

Billie is at her desk looking for something she can't seem to find. Lou crosses to her and sits on the edge of her desk.

LOU

How's the series going?

BILLIE

Frankly I'm kind of stalled... There's a big, big story to be written about black market babies, but I'm not sure how to go after it.

LOU

Black market. You mean selling 'em.

BILLIE

There are lawyers and doctors involved right in this city... but I don't know how to pin one of them down.

Lou gets up off her desk.

CONTINUED

15. CONTINUED

15.

LOU

Maybe I can help you. I've got a friend, Ray McIntyre, in the D.A.'s office. Why don't I see if he'd like to meet us for a drink after work...?

*

He starts away.

BILLIE

Thanks, Lou. I appreciate it.

LOU

(turns back)

Appreciate what. I didn't say I was buying... What's the matter; what are you looking for?

BILLIE

My contact book. I can't imagine what I did with it. It's got all my phone numbers...

Lou turns away, assuming she's misplaced it. Then -- it registers.

LOU

Phone numbers.
(bellowing)
Rossi!

16. Rossi virtually materializes at their side and attempts to slip the book back on the desk with as little fanfare as possible.

16.

ROSSI

Here.

BILLIE

Where was--?

ROSSI

(dismissing it)

I borrowed it.

BILLIE

You what?

ROSSI

And now you got it back so -- no big deal.

CONTINUED

16. CONTINUED

16.

BILLIE

"No big deal?" You took my contact book without asking?

*

LOU

Let's all just be cool, here...

ROSSI

I needed a number.

BILLIE

And you helped yourself? To one of my sources?

LOU

Let's just all keep our voices down here...

ROSSI

That's right. And I admitted it. To your face. I was honest about it.

BILLIE

You call that honest? To swipe my source?

LOU

Keep calm. Let's keep calm...

ROSSI

Boy, honesty sure doesn't pay around here. Okay, I retract that statement. I didn't take it.

BILLIE

Didn't take it. You just admitted you did.

ROSSI

Well, now I deny it! You obviously don't appreciate honesty, so forget it. I never touched your book.

He turns to go.

BILLIE

(screaming)

Rossi...!

CONTINUED

17. CONTINUED

17.

McINTYRE

I'm serious. They advertise for pregnant women. The ads can be pretty blatant, too. Picture of a gorgeous tropical isle and copy that says: "Don't worry--have your baby and a nice vacation, too!"

BILLIE

The broker pays for the vacation?

McINTYRE

Sure -- in order to get the baby afterward.

BILLIE

And why can't your office do something about that kind of obvious advertising?

McINTYRE

A lot of the traffic is between states... and unfortunately, we have no federal laws covering this.

LOU

I don't remember seeing too many ads like that... how else do they get 'em?

McINTYRE

A lot of pregnant women come to these people on "referrals." A doctor or nurse will get a fee from the broker for sending them a girl who's worried about whether or not to keep her baby.

LOU

And, of course, they tell her "yes."

McINTYRE

They tell her more than that. They tell her they'll pay her expenses, pay for having the baby, find the baby a good home and give her a little something extra on the side.

BILLIE

I hate myself for saying this, but...

McINTYRE

--It doesn't sound so bad?

CONTINUED

17. CONTINUED: (2)

17.

BILLIE

Not really. Not if they
do all that. What's so terrible
about it?

*

LOU

I can tell you. 'Cause a baby
shouldn't go to the highest bidder.
Money shouldn't be the criterion
for finding parents.

*

*

McINTYRE

A legitimate adoption agency cares
about the welfare of the kid. They
keep records, make sure the child
is placed with suitable parents,
do follow-ups --

LOU

Whereas these bums take the money
and run.

McINTYRE

The new parents don't know anything
about the baby's background and the
mother has no control over what kind
of home her child will be placed in.
Of course, the broker tells her the
adoptive parents are humanitarian
millionaires -- then he turns around
and tells the parents that the baby
was the love-child of a movie starlet
and a nuclear physicist...

BILLIE

...And will grow up gorgeous and
brilliant.

McINTYRE

That's the idea.

LOU

Suppose it has the professor's
looks and the starlet's brains?

McINTYRE

There are no professor and starlet.
They just make that up.

*

LOU

I know, but it's still something
to think about.

CONTINUED

17. CONTINUED: (2)

17.

BILLIE

(to McIntyre)

So the broker takes any baby he can get and places it with any parents who will pay the price. And lies to everybody. And yet no law is broken...?

McINTYRE

Oh yeah. California Penal Code Number 181. "Receiving money for placing a person in the custody of another"... etc.

LOU

Slavery.

McINTYRE

(nods)

Works for these cases too -- if you can get someone to complain. But no one will come forward. I can give you the name of a doctor right now who's up to his ears in it... but we can't nail him.

BILLIE

Suppose I took a shot at him.

*

McINTYRE

You'd sure have total cooperation from us.

*

CUT TO:

18. INT. DR. DAVIDSON'S OFFICE - DAY

18.

Billie is talking earnestly with Dr. BROOKS DAVIDSON, a nice, sympathetic-seeming OBG.

BILLIE

...My husband and I have tried everything.

DR. DAVIDSON

The human body can be pretty contrary.

*

BILLIE

I've tried taking my temperature every hour on the hour, keeping charts, graphs, figuring my cycle, figuring the phases of the moon...

CONTINUED

18. CONTINUED

18.

DR. DAVIDSON

(chuckles)

What about a good witch doctor?

*

BILLIE

If you know one I'll go to him.

DR. DAVIDSON

I don't. Well, the first thing we should do is to give you a thorough examination.

*

19. That throws Billie and she has to vamp quickly.

19.

BILLIE

Oh, I... already went through that. With... other doctors. And I'm fine. It's my husband. His problem, I mean.

DR. DAVIDSON

You mean a psychological problem?

*

BILLIE

No, no. Physical.

DR. DAVIDSON

Are you sure he's sterile?

*

BILLIE

Positive. Poor darling. And he wants a child so much. We both do.

DR. DAVIDSON

Why did you come to see me?

*

BILLIE

Well I was given your name by a friend of mine, Joan Simpson, whose sister is a nurse at the hospital. As someone who might be able to help us.

*
*
*
*

DR. DAVIDSON

In what way...?

*

BILLIE

We want to adopt.

DR. DAVIDSON

Well, you know there are agencies...

*
*

BILLIE

The state agencies haven't been able to help us. You won't believe how long they said we'd have to wait.

DR. DAVIDSON

Four years, five. Something like that?

*
*

CONTINUED

19. CONTINUED

19.

BILLIE

(nods)

We thought you might be able to put us in touch with someone. A... pregnant woman with a child she didn't want to keep.

*

DR. DAVIDSON

No, not right now.

*

20. Billie does an acting turn. The distraught, would-be parent who has seen her last hope dashed. Dr. Davidson studies Billie closely.

20.

*

DR. DAVIDSON (CONT'D)

Something might come up, though...

*

Billie does her "God bless you" face.

BILLIE

We would be so grateful. We've wanted a child so much. We're really quite desperate. We've had some money set aside.

*

*

DR. DAVIDSON

Let's not talk about money now. I do hear of cases now and then...

*

*

*

BILLIE

If I could just leave my name and number--

*

DR. DAVIDSON

Do that. And may I suggest you both come by tomorrow evening?

BILLIE

Both?

DR. DAVIDSON

I may be able to help, but I'd like to talk to your husband too.

*

CLOSE - BILLIE

Now what the hell do I do?

BILLIE

...Right...

And on her thoughtful look we:

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

21. INT. THE CITY ROOM - DAY

21.

Billie is talking with Lou.

BILLIE

...It's so frustrating. This doctor is nibbling at the bait and I can't reel him in.

LOU

Why not?

BILLIE

Because he insists on meeting my "husband."

LOU

So?

BILLIE

(exasperated)

What do you mean "so?"

22. Hume joins them.

22.

LOU

Pretty girl like you shouldn't have any trouble finding a husband.

HUME

What do you want to find a husband for? *

LOU

Her obstetrician wants to meet him.

HUME

(seriously)

Really?

BILLIE

No, it's for a story on baby-selling. I'm posing as a woman who wants to adopt...

LOU

...Because her husband can't hack it.

HUME

Has he tried oysters?

BILLIE

You two are a lot of fun, you know that?

CONTINUED

22. CONTINUED

22.

LOU

My point was that I don't see your problem. The doctor wants to meet your husband -- we'll find you one. No big deal.

HUME

Wait a minute, now -- wait a minute. That sounds like misrepresentation.

LOU

Well what do you think it is when she says she wants to adopt?

HUME

That's what I mean -- this whole thing sounds like misrepresentation.

LOU

Oh come on, Charlie.

HUME

I don't want our reporters lying about their identities in order to cover a story. It's not ethical.

*

BILLIE

Well I don't think it's ethical for doctors and lawyers to get rich on black market adoptions.

HUME

Lou--

LOU

Charlie, what those guys do hurts a lot of people. Innocent babies and desperate parents. And anything she has to do to expose 'em is justified.

HUME

Okay, okay.

(to Billie)

But, look, please try to avoid saying "this is my husband." Just say "this is Bill" or "Phil" or something like that.

*

LOU

Sure... "this is Bill, who I'm not really married to, he's just a guy who has been trying unsuccessfully to make me pregnant for the last six years!"

*

*

CONTINUED

22. CONTINUED: (2)

22.

BILLIE

When you get through arguing about the ethics would somebody mind telling me where I'm supposed to find this "Bill"?

HUME

Pretty girl like you shouldn't have any trouble finding a husband...

*

And Hume walks away as Billie glares after him.

CUT TO:

23. INT. THE CITY ROOM - DAY

23.

The water cooler. Donovan has just filled himself a cup of water when Billie joins him.

BILLIE

Art, how would you like to marry me?

*

DONOVAN

I knew you were going to ask me sooner or later, and I was wondering how I was going to let you down easily...

*

*

*

BILLIE

It's for a story. I mean "act" as my husband. You wouldn't have to marry me.

*

DONOVAN

"Act" as your husband. I like the sound of that...

*

BILLIE

It will only be for a few days.

DONOVAN

Gee, somehow I thought we'd last a little longer than that.

*

BILLIE

Just long enough to convince a slightly-shady doctor. That we can't have children.

*

*

*

CONTINUED

23. CONTINUED:

23.

DONOVAN

Uh-oh. And... exactly what do I have to do to help convince him?

*

BILLIE

Nothing. Honestly. Not a thing. I'm in charge. You don't do a thing.

DONOVAN

No wonder we don't have any children.

CUT TO:

24. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

24.

Billie is at her desk, on the phone.

BILLIE

We'd like to meet with you, doctor. At whatever time is convenient.

25. INT. DR. DAVIDSON'S OFFICE - DAY

25.

He is on the phone.

DR. DAVIDSON

Well, now, Mrs. Newman, I've been thinking. I'm not sure it's wise to get your hopes up -- and your husband's hopes -- when the chances are so... slim...

*

CUT TO:

26. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

26.

INTERCUT

BILLIE

Dr. Davidson we'd do anything to have a baby. And money is no object.

*

DR. DAVIDSON

(pause)

Why don't we say around seven-thirty...

*

Billie hangs up slowly, with a "now I've got you" look.

CUT TO:

27. INT. BILLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

27.

The doorbell rings. Billie crosses to the door and opens it. Donovan is standing in the doorway, not looking too good.

DONOVAN

(weakly)

Hi...

28. ANOTHER ANGLE

28.

As Billie lets him in and closes door.

BILLIE

Hi. What's the matter?

DONOVAN

I don't know. Either flu or food poisoning. I don't know which to hope for. Food poisoning's worse but flu lasts longer.

BILLIE

Stomach?

DONOVAN

Everything.

BILLIE

Wonderful!

DONOVAN

Don't worry. I can make it to the doctor's office.

BILLIE

He's not that kind of a doctor.

DONOVAN

So -- we'll tell him it's morning sickness. Evening sickness. Oh boy...

29. He has a slight attack. Billie takes his arm.

29.

BILLIE

Are you okay?

DONOVAN

(straightening)

Of course. I'm a pro. We have an assignment and I'm gonna...

(stricken again)

...be...

CONTINUED

29. CONTINUED

29.

BILLIE
(pointing quickly)
In there!

DONOVAN
Thanks!

He bolts out of the room. Billie crosses and picks up the phone and dials.

CUT TO:

30. INT. LOU'S HOUSE - NIGHT

30.

Lou working at his desk in shirtsleeves. Phone rings, he picks it up.

LOU
Hello ... oh hi, Billie. How's it...?

*

(listens)
He would. Well you've got to go through with the appointment-- we can't afford to make the doctor suspicious.

(listens more; smiles)
Who, me? Naw... he'd never believe you were married to me. It's a flattering thought, but I've got to work anyway. Look, don't worry. I'll find you somebody.

BILLIE
(already suspicious)
Who?

*
**
*

CUT TO:

31. INT. DR. DAVIDSON'S WAITING ROOM - NIGHT

31.

Billie and Rossi are sitting next to each other. He doesn't look particularly thrilled with the situation.

*
*

ROSSI
I hope you appreciate this. I had plans for this evening.

BILLIE
It wasn't my idea.

ROSSI
What do you mean, it wasn't your idea? Lou said you asked for me.

BILLIE
Lou was trying to be funny.

CONTINUED

31. CONTINUED

31.

ROSSI

What's funny about asking for me?

BILLIE

You're right; it isn't funny.

ROSSI

May I point out to you, I'm doing you a favor!

BILLIE

(biting it)

I know, Rossi... and I appreciate it.

ROSSI

I mean, I don't like it either. But I'm a professional. I can accept an assignment, play my part, and not take it personally. Why don't you try to do the same?

32. Interior door opens and Dr. Davidson appears in the doorway.

32. *

DR. DAVIDSON

Mrs. Newman... Mr. Newman?
Please come in.

*

He turns and goes on into his office. The two rise.

ROSSI

"Mr. Newman"....?

BILLIE

Don't take it personally... dear.

Smiling, she takes his hand like a loving wife and leads him toward the inner office.

33. INT. DOCTOR DAVIDSON'S OFFICE - NIGHT

33. *

Dr. Davidson is at his desk as they enter.

*

BILLIE

Dr. Davidson...this is Joe.

*

They shake hands.

DR. DAVIDSON

Let me tell you something straight. Your problem is very, very common. It is shared by thousands and thousands of men.

*

CONTINUED

33. CONTINUED

33.

ROSSI

My...problem...

DR. DAVIDSON

It is nothing to be ashamed of--
I cannot stress that too heavily.
It's no reflection on your...
"manhood" or anything of the sort.

*

BILLIE

(enjoying this)

Of course. That's what I keep
telling Joe.

ROSSI

Yeah, well... you know...

BILLIE

In every other respect he's very
masculine, believe me.

DR. DAVIDSON

Good, good. What do you do, Mr.
Newman?

*

Billie takes Rossi's hand and answers for him. In the
following exchanges she keeps playing up the loving glances
at him, making clear she loves him despite his faults.
Rossi's teeth are grinding almost audibly. Billie takes
his arm.

*

*

BILLIE

He's unemployed. Don't get me
wrong -- Joe's had jobs, lots of
jobs. He's just a creative guy
and he hasn't found the right
thing for himself.

DR. DAVIDSON

Yes. Well...

*

BILLIE

But I have a good bit of money
my family left me, so that's not
a problem, thank goodness.

DR. DAVIDSON

Have you had a history of any psychological
or mental problems?

ROSSI

No.

DR. DAVIDSON

Then I have to ask you this, Mr. Newman.
Do you have a drinking problem?

ROSSI

A drinking problem? Me?

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

*

CONTINUED

34.

BILLIE

34.

He's just a social drinker...
for the most part. He does have
a lot of time on his hands.

*

DR. DAVIDSON

*

We have to be careful where
we place the child. The home
situation, that sort of thing...

*

*

*



*

BILLIE

Does that mean you know of a
baby?

*

DR. DAVIDSON

*

It's very possible one may be
available.

BILLIE

*

Great.

*

DR. DAVIDSON

*

There's several other steps we'll have
to go through.

*

*

BILLIE

*

Like what?

*

DR. DAVIDSON

*

I'll have to set up an appointment with
Mr. Karlan. He's an attorney and he'll
handle the actual details.

*

*

*

ROSSI

*

Fine. That's fine.

*

DR. DAVIDSON

*

His customary fee is one thousand dollars,
by the way.

*

BILLIE

A thousand dollars. Will a check be
all right?

*

*

CONTINUED

34.

CONTINUED

34.

DR. DAVIDSON

That'll be fine.

BILLIE

And that will cover everything.

DR. DAVIDSON

No, the check will be for a thousand,
and an additional nine thousand in cash,
one thousand when you meet and the
rest on delivery of the baby.

(a brief smile)

Sounds funny, doesn't it? A lawyer
"delivering a baby?"

ROSSI

Very funny. So, this lawyer gets
a check for a thousand plus we give
him a thousand in cash up front.

DR. DAVIDSON

Right. You can give it to him
when you meet him. Is tomorrow
evening okay?

BILLIE

Fine. Shall we come here at the
same time?

DR. DAVIDSON

No, no. Not here. He'll come to
your place.

(off their look)

Well, we are placing the infant in
your home, Mrs. Newman. It's only
proper that we see how you and Mr.
Newman live...

And on their look we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

35. INT. HUME'S OFFICE - DAY

35.

Hume is meeting with Lou, Billie and Rossi.

HUME

Okay, okay. Are we absolutely sure this guy is a crook? Not just over-priced?

ROSSI

Lou, she went out of her way to make me sound like a bum.

LOU

Did she have to go far out of her way?

ROSSI

I mean she said I drank, couldn't hold a job, couldn't...do a lot of stuff...

BILLIE

...And I did it on purpose, Lou. To see if it made any difference what kind of parents they gave the baby to. And it made no difference at all -- so long as we had lots of money.

HUME

"Lots"... of money. How much is that in dollars?

ROSSI

Ten thousand dollars.

HUME

Ten thousand dollars? *

BILLIE

And nine of it has to be in cash... eventually. For now we need a check for a thousand and another thousand in cash.

36.

HUME

The check is probably to make it look legitimate.

36.

CONTINUED

36. CONTINUED

36.

LOU

Sure. Makes sense. Afterwards, the only record will be that the lawyer got a thousand. Which isn't out of line.

BILLIE

They want it tonight. The check for a thousand and a thousand in cash.

HUME

And eight thousand later.

LOU

Is that a problem?

HUME

No, this is a big story. We'll get the money for you.

*
*

LOU

Great. So... let's go.

ROSSI

Just a minute. Does this mean I have to go on posing as her husband? At home.

LOU

So...? Try to look like a boozier who can't do anything. Think you can handle it?

ROSSI

And exactly what am I getting out of this?

HUME

All you can drink.

ROSSI

I'm serious. This is her story and I'm doing half the work. How about half the credit?

*

BILLIE

Oh, now, wait a minute...!

ROSSI

You want a husband?

CONTINUED

36. CONTINUED: (2)

36.

BILLIE

Now just hang on; that's blackmail!

ROSSI

If I share the work, I share the credit. Lou, what about it?

BILLIE

Lou? Do I have to put up with this?

37. Lou tries to look statesmanlike.

37.

LOU

Well... now... in a case like this I can see some justification for both points of view. I think we have to be dispassionate, logical, and try to compromise between --

Billie and Rossi ad lib a firestorm of "wait a minute," "hold it!" "no compromise," "That's no fair," "Whose story is it?" and the like. They both talk at once, non-stop.

LOU (CONT'D)

(no longer statesmanlike)

Shut up! Both of you!

They shut up.

HUME

Close your eyes, it could be Henry Kissinger.

LOU

This story is more important than individual egos. Now... it's Billie's story, so she'll write it.

38. Rossi starts to protest.

38.

LOU (CONT'D)

But -- Rossi is working hard on it, too, so he'll share the byline.

BILLIE

Lou!

*
*

LOU

But her name will go first.

Neither Billie nor Rossi seems entirely satisfied with the decision.

CONTINUED

38. CONTINUED

38.

LOU (CONT'D)

(firmly)

And that's my decision and I think it's fair and the subject is closed. Any questions?

HUME

(after a beat)

Yeah -- how the hell am I gonna get ten thousand dollars out of Mrs. Pynchon?

*

CUT TO:

39. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

39.

Billie and Rossi emerge from Hume's office and cross, hot in conversation.

ROSSI

I don't like any part of this! I've got to come and sit around your place all evening waiting for some guy to show up.

BILLIE

I don't like it any better, but we could hardly use your place.

ROSSI

Why not?

BILLIE

Oh, come on, Rossi!

ROSSI

What do you mean, come on, Rossi.

BILLIE

You think it looks like the kind of place I'd be living in?

*

ROSSI

We'd be living in. We, remember? Dear. And why not?

*

As they cross, they are joined by Animal.

BILLIE

It just wouldn't. Trust me. We'll use my place.

CONTINUED

39. CONTINUED

39.

ANIMAL

Want to use my place?

ROSSI

Gimme a break! If my place
won't do, yours sure won't.

ANIMAL

Why not? What's wrong with my
place?

Donovan now also joins them.

DONOVAN

What's up?

ANIMAL

They can't decide whether to
use her place or his place so
I offered my place.

DONOVAN

For what?

ANIMAL

What do you think?

BILLIE

(to him)

Not what you think!

DONOVAN

(indicating Animal)

Well, whatever it is I wouldn't
use his place.

(to Billie)

I'm sorry about last night.

BILLIE

That's okay. How do you feel?

DONOVAN

Much better.

ROSSI

Now you feel better. Where were
you last night?

DONOVAN

Sick. Believe me, I was so sick
I didn't know what to do. I just
wanted some place to lie down.

ANIMAL

You could have used my place.

CUT TO:

40. INT. MRS. PYNCHON'S OFFICE - DAY

40.

Hume is standing facing her desk. He has just presented his proposal.

MRS. PYNCHON

Ten... thousand... dollars, Mr. Hume? That's a one, followed by four zeroes.

HUME

I know it's a great amount of money, but we think it's worth it.

MRS. PYNCHON

Do you.

41.

HUME

Besides which, the money will be marked. I have every confidence we'll get it back, Mrs. Pynchon. We're working closely with the D.A.'s Office on this.

41.

MRS. PYNCHON

Why don't they put up the ten thousand then?

(relenting)

No, I understand, Mr. Hume. And I agree: It is a big story and I'd like very much to see those people exposed. I'd like it better if it could be done for five thousand, but if ten is what it takes, you'll have it.

HUME

We have to let them call the shots for the moment. They're very cagey.

MRS. PYNCHON

They're despicable.

(off his look)

The emotions they prey on are very deep, Mr. Hume... and very basic. I know. For years I wanted to adopt a child.

HUME

Oh, really? I didn't know that.

*
*
*

CONTINUED

41. CONTINUED

41.

MRS. PYNCHON

Well, Matthew and I were unable to have a child of our own. Which we very much wanted. He hoped that some day we might... get lucky.

(a wintery smile)

If we had adopted I would have had somebody to take over the newspaper.

HUME

I'm sorry, Mrs. Pynchon.

MRS. PYNCHON

Cheer up, Mr. Hume. Perhaps I'll adopt you...

CUT TO:

41A. INT. CITY ROOM - NIGHT

41A.

It is just after deadline. Leon crosses the city room, passes Lou's desk on his way to Hume's office. He taps on the door, and sticks his head in.

41B. INT. HUME'S OFFICE - NIGHT

41B.

Hume looks up.

LEON

Here's that money you wanted me to bring up from accounting.

HUME

(alarmed)

Shh. Don't say money out loud.

Hume crosses and takes the envelope from Leon.

HUME (CONT'D)

Thanks, Leon. Will you ask Lou to come in?

41C. INT. CITY ROOM - NIGHT

41C.

Leon crosses to Lou's desk.

LEON

Lou, Mr. Hume would like to see you.

Lou nods, grabs his coat off of his chair, and crosses to Hume's office.

(TO 31A)

41D. INT. HUME'S OFFICE - NIGHT

41D.

As Lou enters, Charlie is sitting, pecking away at his typewriter.

LOU
Letter-to-the-editor, Charlie?

HUME
No, I'm just typing an envelope here for the...uh...would you close the door, Lou?

LOU
(closing the door)
What's up?

Charlie rolls an envelope out of the typewriter, then swivels in his chair and very surreptitiously opens his desk drawer and takes out inner-office envelope and removes ten hundred dollar bills out of it, counts them to make sure, slips them into the envelope he has been typing, licks it, seals it, then scotch tapes it for good measure before handing it to Lou.

LOU
Sealed orders, chief?
(then, reading envelope)
"Laundry receipts, 1959 through '64."

HUME
This is the cash for Billie to give the lawyer tonight.

LOU
"Laundry receipts." Good thinking.

HUME
It's a lot of money, Lou.

LOU
Charlie, I'm not going to be anywhere where I could get nugged.

HUME
Probably not. But if you should get in an accident, god forbid, and somebody should go through your clothes...

LOU
(gesturing with the envelope)
Would you like to handcuff it to my wrist, Charlie?

CONTINUED (TO 31B)

41D. CONTINUED

41D.

HUME

No, but try not to wave it around like that.

LOU

Come on, there's nobody out there but reporters.

HUME

That's right. And I know what we pay them.

LOU

Don't worry. It's all a matter of how you carry it off. You gotta not act like a guy who has a thousand dollars in his pocket.

He puts the envelope in his coat pocket, tries to look casual.

LOU (CONT'D)

See what I mean, Charlie?

HUME

I'll walk you to your car when you leave.

LOU

Do you have your gun?

CUT TO: (to 31C)

42. INT. BILLIE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

42.

The living room area. Rossi has a suitcase open and is taking out toilet articles, as Billie emerges from the kitchen area.

BILLIE

(notes his stuff)

What are you doing?

ROSSI

Stocking your medicine cabinet with my things.

BILLIE

Rossi, who in the world do you imagine is going to lock in my medicine cabinet?

ROSSI

Lots of people look in medicine cabinets. This guy could be a snoop. He gets here, says he has to go to the head, and then checks out your bathroom. Which better look like our bathroom.

43. He starts out, then turns back sniffing.

43.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

What are you cooking?

BILLIE

Calves liver. For dinner.

CONTINUED (to 32)

43. CONTINUED

43.

ROSSI

I hate liver.

BILLIE

Ask me how much I care.

ROSSI

Hey I'm your husband, remember?
For the night, anyhow.

BILLIE

For the evening, Rossi. Just
for the early evening.

With a shrug, Rossi exits. The doorbell RINGS.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

That's probably Lou. I'll get it.

44. She answers the door. It is Lou, who enters.

44.

LOU

All set?

BILLIE

I think so.

(notices suitcase)

Rossi! Come get your suitcase
out of the living room.

LOU

What's he got a suitcase for?

BILLIE

He's making it look authentic.
Scattering little souvenirs of
himself around my apartment.

Rossi enters in time to hear the last.

ROSSI

Yeah -- I got a pair of my
socks soaking in the bathroom
basin.

LOU

(admiringly)

Nice. That's a nice touch.

BILLIE

(not admiringly)

Charming.

CONTINUED

44. CONTINUED

44.

ROSSI

(grinning)

Well, you know. Husband and wife. Intimate. Which reminds me... I want to ask you about a couple of things in the medicine cabinet --

BILLIE

(turning on him)

I'm warning you, Rossi!

45. Backing down quickly, Rossi retreats to the living room closet to stow his suitcase.

45.

LOU

What time is the guy coming?

BILLIE

Any minute. Got the money?

LOU

Yeah. Check for a thousand and another thousand in marked bills.

He takes it all out and gives check to her.

LOU (CONT'D)

The check's made out to you, Billie, so you can deposit it in your account to cover the check you'll have to write the lawyer.

46. Billie goes and puts check away.

46.

ROSSI

(returning)

How come I don't write the check?

LOU

Because your name is supposed to be "Newman." And banks have a way of getting huffy when you write checks using other people's names.

(handing Rossi cash)

But you can hand the man the cash if you'd like.

*
*
*

CONTINUED

46. CONTINUED

46.

As Rossi counts:

*

LOU (CONT'D)

I didn't feel too comfortable carrying that over here. I haven't handled that much cash since the Army.

ROSSI

What were you, a quartermaster?

LOU

Naw. I ran the crap game at Fort Hood.

*

Billie comes back from putting away check, now carrying her own checkbook.

BILLIE

I'd invite you to stay for dinner but it might look a bit suspicious when the lawyer arrives.

LOU

That's okay. It smells like liver. I hate liver.

ROSSI

Boy, me too. Is that the worst-smelling stuff?

LOU

I'll say. Not great looking, either.

ROSSI

Or tasting.

BILLIE

(indignant)

All right! As I said, you're not invited anyhow. Either of you.

47. The door bell RINGS.

47.

LOU

(quietly)

Oh-oh. I better get out of here. Is there a back door?

Billie nods and leads him quickly toward the kitchen. Rossi follows.

48. INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

48.

The three enter and she leads him to the door.

LOU

I haven't sneaked out a back door since the army.

BILLIE

What were you, a spy?

ROSSI

No, he ran the crap-game at Fort Hood.

*

LOU

Call me as soon as he's gone.
Good luck.

Lou exits. The doorbell RINGS again. Billie and Rossi hurry back into living room.

49. INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

49.

As they enter.

BILLIE

(calling)

Coming...!

She crosses and opens front door, admitting MR. KARLAN, the attorney.

KARLAN

Mrs. Newman? I'm Ernest Karlan.

*

BILLIE

How do you do, Mr. Karlan.
This is Joe -- we've been expecting you.

ROSSI

So... are you going to be able to find us a child, Mr. Karlan?

KARLAN

It's possible.
(looks around)
You folks don't really look as though you have much room to spare.

BILLIE

It's roomier than it looks.

CONTINUED

49. CONTINUED

49.

ROSSI

Yeah. Look around. The bedroom's through there. Also the bathroom.

*
*

KARLAN

No thanks. What I meant was, have you really room for a child?

ROSSI

If we had a kid we'd move. To be very honest with you, I've never cared for this place anyhow.

KARLAN

Oh, I wasn't criticizing your home--

ROSSI

No, I wouldn't blame you if you did. It's a little tacky.

BILLIE

Would you like to sit down?

KARLAN

Yes.

50. They all sit.

50.

BILLIE

Is there a child ready for adoption, Mr. Karlan?

KARLAN

(beaming)

Why should I keep you folks in suspense? The answer is yes: There's a good chance we can have one for you by Sunday night.

BILLIE

Really? That soon? Oh, Mr. Karlan...!

*
*

KARLAN

We're making arrangements with the prospective mother right now. Quite a story, incidentally. The baby is the product of a love affair between a professor of English Literature and a college cheerleader. Quite an attractive girl.

CONTINUED

50. CONTINUED

50.

ROSSI

Holy smoke -- what potential a kid like that could have.

KARLAN

It certainly could. Did my associate explain the financial arrangements to you?

BILLIE

Yes he did. Shall I make the check out to you?

KARLAN

That'll be fine. Ernest J. Karlan.
K-A-R-L-A-N.

*

She does so. Rossi, meanwhile, takes out the cash.

ROSSI

And here's the rest of the down-payment. One thousand in cash.

51. He hands it over. Karlan counts it.

51.

KARLAN

Good. I hope you folks understand why we have to do this. There are so many expenses.

He finishes counting it.

BILLIE

We understand. And we're very, very grateful.

Billie hands him the check.

ROSSI

Now you'll want eight thousand more on delivery, right?

KARLAN

Actually, I'm afraid it's going to be more like thirteen thousand.

BILLIE

Thirteen -- ?

ROSSI

Thirteen -- ?

*

*

KARLAN

The total is now fifteen thousand. I'm really sorry, but our expenses like everybody elses have gone right through the roof.

*

CONTINUED

51. CONTINUED

51.

Rossi and Billie look at each other for a beat. Then:

ROSSI

Geez, I don't know.

BILLIE

Joe, please...

ROSSI

Okay... okay, if that's what it costs, that's what it costs.

*

KARLAN

We're working with a clinic near Gorman where the baby is to be born. That's where we'll contact you.

*

BILLIE

In... Gorman?

*

KARLAN

Sure. It shouldn't be any problem. There's a nice little motel there. (hands them a card) The Palomino. You folks check in and we'll get in touch with you Monday night.

*

He turns and starts for the door.

CUT TO:

52. INT. ELEVATOR IN THE TRIB BUILDING - DAY

52.

Mrs. Pynchon and Hume are riding down.

MRS. PYNCHON

How's the story on black market adoptions coming, Mr. Hume?

HUME

Oh, fine. Just fine. (casually)

What's your floor, Mrs. Pynchon?

MRS. PYNCHON

I'm getting off on six.

Hume looks up at numbers.

CONTINUED

52. CONTINUED

52.

HUME

There's just been... one...
(pause)
...little problem...

The car stops. Door opens. Mrs. Pynchon gets out, then turns.

MRS. PYNCHON

Yes? And what is the problem?

His hand sneaks up near the button marked "close door."

HUME

Well, you see... now... They want...

He hits the button. The door starts to shut. When Mrs. Pynchon is almost out of sight, he finishes sentence.

HUME (CONT'D)

...Fifteen thousand.

53. INT. THE TRIB HALLWAY - OUTSIDE ELEVATOR DOOR - DAY

53.

And as Mrs. Pynchon stands, stoney-faced, staring at elevator door that has closed in her face, we:

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

54. INT. LOU'S OFFICE - DAY

54.

A meeting is in progress. Lou is at his desk, McIntyre is seated on the edge, with Hume, Billie and Rossi ringed about.

McINTYRE

...You've heard my views. What are your feelings?

HUME

Well, we could do the story right now, as is. We're only out two thousand.

LOU

Not much of a story yet. *

HUME

(defensively)

Enough. I think it'd make a pretty good story. And we're only out two thousand.

ROSSI

But we'll have a lot better story if we follow it through to the end.

LOU

That's what I say. Billie?

BILLIE

How long will we have to stay in that motel room?

McINTYRE

Hard to say. For our purposes we have to catch them actually selling you a baby. You may have a story now, but we don't have a case.

HUME

You're sure we'd get the money back?

McINTYRE

I can't promise you that but we're reasonably certain. We'll be standing by in Gorman, and your people will keep us posted. We'll move in the moment they hand you the baby and you hand them the cash. Needless to say, I'd like to see you go through with it. *

CONTINUED

54. CONTINUED

54.

LOU

(decisively)

Then that's what we're gonna do.
We're gonna follow this through
to the end.

(to Billie)

And you're gonna get one heck of
a story.

(to Rossi)

And you're gonna get a byline.

HUME

(attempted confidence)

And we're gonna get the money back...

CUT TO:

55. EXT. DUSTY CALIFORNIA COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

55.

A convertible with the top up meanders along a road through
unprepossessing scenery. CAMERA MOVES IN

56. INT. THE CAR - DAY

56.

Rossi and Billie. He is driving, (under the speed limit)
she is complaining. The top is down on the Mustang.

*
*

BILLIE

Why did it have to be Gorman?

ROSSI

They're playing it safe; making
us come to them. They don't want
to travel any distance with the
baby. That's why we're headed
for the boondocks.

BILLIE

We passed the boondocks an hour
ago! We're almost to the toolies.
It's awfully hot. How about putting
the top up and turning on the air-
conditioning?

*
*
*

ROSSI

Who needs air-conditioning with a
convertible?

*
*

CONTINUED

56. CONTINUED

56.

BILLIE

Right.

(fanning herself)

Do you suppose you could go a little faster? We've only seen two other vehicles in the past half-hour: a tractor and a melon truck -- and they both passed us!

*
*

ROSSI

What's your hurry?
get it...

Oh... I

(smug)

Can't wait to get to the motel,
right?

Billie makes the noise of a woman sorely tried, and slumps further down in the seat.

CUT TO:

57. EXT. THE PALOMINO MOTEL - DAY

57.

Rundown. It is virtually alone in a bleak landscape. All it lacks are animal skulls scattered about.

After a beat the convertible pulls in, in a cloud of dust. Rossi gets out, grabs the suitcase and starts in. Slowly, Billie gets out her side and trudges reluctantly after him.

CUT TO:

58. INT. THE MOTEL - FRONT DESK - DAY

58.

There is a sleazy-looking CLERK behind it as first Rossi and then Billie come to the desk.

ROSSI

Hi. We're Mr. and Mrs. --

BILLIE

(quickly)

-- Newman.

CLERK

Hey, you can be Mr. and Mrs.
anything you want. Need a room?

ROSSI

Yeah. For.. the night.

CLERK

The whole night?

CONTINUED

58. CONTINUED

58.

ROSSI

Yeah.

BILLIE

No!

CLERK

Well, you two will have to work
that out between yourselves.
Just gimme twenty bucks in advance...

Rossi pays him the twenty.

ROSSI

You got TV?

CLERK

Oh yeah... closed circuit. Cost
you another two bucks, but it's
worth it. Today we got: "Swingin'
in the Rain."

*
*

BILLIE

(in all seriousness)

The one with Gene Kelly?

*

CLERK

(of Billie, approvingly)

Funny.

ROSSI

(shakes head, wearily)

She meant it...

Clerk reacts as Rossi picks up key and starts out.

CUT TO:

59. INT. THEIR ROOM - DAY

59.

It is a pretty bare room. Rossi closes door and tosses
key on the dresser. Billie is fooling with the room air
conditioner.

BILLIE

...Well, why didn't you tell
me it was that kind of a motel?

ROSSI

I didn't know myself till I looked
around. It's not even a good one:
(gestures overhead)
no mirror --

CONTINUED

59. CONTINUED

59.

BILLIE

(hits it)

Also no air-conditioning.

He sinks onto the bed, then jiggles delightedly.

ROSSI

Hey -- it could be worse. We
got a waterbed.

BILLIE

That's probably the closest any
of their customers come to bathing.

60. She picks up phone and starts dialing.

60.

ROSSI

Who are you calling?

BILLIE

Lou.

ROSSI

Here -- sit down.

He moves over to give her room so she can talk on the phone.

BILLIE

(into phone)

Hello, Lou? It's Billie...

She sits at that point, and the motion of the bed throws
her slightly. She gives a little yip of surprise.

CUT TO:

61. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

61.

Lou at his desk, on the phone. Hume hovering in the
background.

LOU

(into phone)

Billie? What's the matter? ...Oh,
well, you just sounded funny, that's
all.

HUME

What have they done with the money?
Is it in a safe place?

CONTINUED

61. CONTINUED

61.

LOU

(into phone)

Billie? Charlie wants to know about the money...

HUME

Tell her to put it under the mattress for security.

LOU

(into phone)

...He thinks you should put it under the mattress.

(listens)

It's a what? Oh... oh, well, in that case maybe you'd better leave it in your wallet.

CUT TO:

62. INT. THE MOTEL ROOM - DAY

62.

BILLIE

(into phone)

I'll call you as soon as they make contact with us. I just wanted to check in. Right. Okay.

She hangs up. Rossi is fiddling with TV set.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

...What are you doing?

ROSSI

Turning on the movie.

BILLIE

You want to watch a porno?

ROSSI

Come on -- it's that or stand in the hall and listen to the ice-machine.

BILLIE

You can watch if you want to -- I'm not going to.

ROSSI

Suit yourself...

63. ANOTHER ANGLE

63.

From behind the TV we see Rossi's face as the picture comes on. He watches intently for a moment, smiling. Then Billie drifts into the picture in back of him -- very casually -- and steals a quick look over his shoulder. She turns away, then turns back and watches more -- gradually becoming incredulous.

BILLIE

That's disgusting!

Rossi turns and looks at her quizzically.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Well, I mean -- do you find that erotic?

Rossi shrugs, noncommittally, and turns back to screen.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

I don't. I don't find that the least bit erotic. It's too... obvious, too explicit. It's a turnoff. That's not erotic.

She starts to turn away again, then turns back and watches a bit more.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

(grudgingly)

Now that's erotic...

CUT TO:

64. INT. LOU'S HOUSE - NIGHT

64.

Lou is dialing on the phone.

LOU

(into phone)

Hello? Yes -- Mr. and Mrs. Newman, please?

(waits)

Hi, Billie? Lou. What's going on? Why haven't I heard from you?

CUT TO:

65. INT. THE MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

65.

INTERCUT:

BILLIE

(into phone)

Because we haven't heard anything ourselves. Not a word. It's been the longest five hours of my life. You don't suppose they're wise to us?

CONTINUED

*

65. CONTINUED

65.

Door opens behind her and Rossi enters, carrying sandwiches which he unwraps during conversation.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

...Hm? Nothing. There's nothing to do. We watched a movie on television.

LOU

You're just like me. As soon as I get in a hotel I start watching old movies. What did you see?

BILLIE

"Swingin' in the Rain" and "What Happened to Bonnie?"

LOU

What's that? A whodunnit?

*
*
*
*
*

BILLIE

No... no, this movie was more of an "everybody dunnit"...

LOU

Well, listen, I've been talking to McIntyre and he's ready to move the second you call him. Meanwhile, I guess you've just got to sit tight.

*
*
*

BILLIE

I know. And I will. But I'll tell you something: The next time I do a story like this it'll be faster if I just have the baby myself!

66. She hangs up and turns to inspect the sandwiches Rossi got.

66.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

These the best you could do?

ROSSI

Sorry -- they didn't have any with liver in 'em.

Billie crosses to a small two-cup motel coffee maker. It has only one cup.

BILLIE

Did you ask at the desk if we could get another cup for this?

CONTINUED

66. CONTINUED

66.

ROSSI

Yeah. He just laughed. He didn't know there was a coffee-maker. Says it must be left over from the previous owner.

67. Phone RINGS. He goes to answer it.

67.

BILLIE

Please let that be Karlan. I can't take any more of this!

ROSSI

(into phone)

Hello? Oh hi!...

(signals "it is")

Hey, I'm glad to hear from you. We were just... yeah? What do you mean? Un-huh. I see. Well so, what do we --? Yeah. I see. Well, sure... I guess there's nothing else we can do. Okay...

68. Rossi hangs up, looking thoughtful.

68.

BILLIE

I didn't like the sound of that.

ROSSI

Karlan is tied up on a case in L.A. and he hasn't been able to get away. He'll be here when he can. It may be a couple of hours or it may not be until morning.

*
*
*
*

BILLIE

Oh no...

ROSSI

He'll call us when he gets here.

*

BILLIE

(almost frantic)

So what are we supposed to do in the meantime?

ROSSI

Well if we're gonna be here till morning, Mrs. Newman, I'd suggest we try out the ol' water bed.

BILLIE

What?

CONTINUED

68. CONTINUED

68.

ROSSI

(wearily)

To sleep on ... to sleep on.

*

And as she continues to stand, regarding him suspiciously, he kicks off his shoes and heads for the bed.

CUT TO:

69. INT. THE MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

69.

It is perhaps an hour later. Both Billie and Rossi are lying on the bed with shoes and lights off, trying to sleep. (There may be some kind of outside neon sign for the motel that either flashes or shines in their window to give us minimal illumination.)

After a beat, Billie flails about, trying to find a more comfortable position. She finds one and is still again for a beat. Then Rossi speaks.

ROSSI

What's the matter? Insomnia?

BILLIE

Sea-sickness.

ROSSI

Gee, I was sleeping like a log till you started sloshing around.

*

BILLIE

Sorry. But you weren't helping any.

ROSSI

What do you mean?

BILLIE

You snore.

ROSSI

Really? I didn't realize. What does it sound like?

BILLIE

Grotesque. My husband used to do that.

*
*

70. Rossi accepts that in silence. There is a beat or so. Then it sinks in and he suddenly turns.

CONTINUED

70. . CONTINUED

70.

ROSSI

You were married?

BILLIE

Crackerjack mind. That was a slip.
Forget I said that. Go back to sleep.

*
*

ROSSI

I never knew that you were
married.

BILLIE

I never told anyone. Let's forget it.

*

ROSSI

How long were you married?

BILLIE

Few years. I got married in
college. We were both very
young.

ROSSI

Bad experience, huh?

BILLIE

No... actually... pretty good.
While it lasted.

ROSSI

What happened?

BILLIE

I knocked him off. He knew too
much.

Silence.-----

*

BILLIE (CONT'D)

He met somebody else. They have
three kids now. End of story.
Good night.

(beat)

That's private. Okay, Rossi?

*

ROSSI

Yeah... sure... they have three
kids, huh? That must... feel strange.

(thinks)

And you never told anybody that, huh?

CONTINUED

70. CONTINUED: (2)

70.

BILLIE

Un-uh.

ROSSI

It's funny. Two people go off on a story... they get to know each other. For the first time.

71. Billie makes a faint noise of agreement.

71.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

I'm glad you told me. I... appreciate your trusting me.

Another non-comittal noise from Billie.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

I have... kind of a similar thing in my life. I was... in love. For about four years. She was a wonderful woman... funny, bright. And I really felt I could have a life with her. She had a couple of kids. Even that was nice. I really went after her.. courted her, you know. And she finally fell in love with me. She wanted to get married. Somehow I got cold feet and walked away from it. And if I hadn't chickened out...

*
*
*
*

Now and

then I think about her.

His story told, Rossi waits for comment. For a beat there is silence. Then he leans a bit closer to Billie and we hear her snoring gently.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

(after a beat)

That's private, okay?

CUT TO:

73. INT. THE MOTEL ROOM - EARLY MORNING

73.

Billie is on the phone; Rossi is looking out the window.

INTERCUT:

BILLIE

(into phone)

Lou it's Billie... the baby is on its way!

CONTINUED

73. CONTINUED

73.

LOU

How far apart are the contractions...?

BILLIE

What?

LOU

(realizing)

Oh... sorry. I'm not awake.

BILLIE

The lawyer just called -- he's bringing over the baby. We already called the D.A.'s office and they're on their way, too.

LOU

(now awake; slow grin)

Atta girl. I hope you really nail the creep.

74. She hangs up phone, but continues to sit there, thinking. 74.
After a beat, Rossi turns back from the window.

ROSSI

What's the matter?

BILLIE

I was just wondering. After we expose these people... what happens to the baby?

ROSSI

It'll go to a licensed agency. Who will get it some good, qualified parents.

He looks at her again. She is still far away.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

Certainly not as good as Mr. and Mrs. Newman. But that'll be okay.

*
*

75. EXT. THE MOTEL - DAY

75.

A car pulls up and Karlan gets out. He looks around, and then proceeds casually to one of the motel rooms and knocks.

76. INT. THE MOTEL ROOM - DAY

76.

In answer to a knock, Rossi opens the door and lets Karlan in.

CONTINUED

76. CONTINUED

76.

KARLAN

Sorry it took so long.

BILLIE

It's okay.

Karlan looks around the room and then exits.

*
*

77. EXT. MOTEL - DAY

77.

Karlan walks up to the car, opens the door and helps a NURSE, who carries the baby to the motel room. The three of them enter the room.

78. INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

78.

NURSE #2

Here you are, Mrs. Newman.

*
*

She hands the baby to Billie who is truly taken with it. It's a gorgeous child.

BILLIE

Oh, look how sweet...

*
*

She trails off into one of those non-verbal sounds one makes at babies, nuzzling it, etc.

ROSSI

(to Karlan)

I've got your money right here.

He hands money to Karlan who counts it carefully.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

That's a lot of cash to carry around.

KARLAN

I know... but we have to do it this way for a variety of reasons.

ROSSI

I understand.

Nurse gives Billie a small package of baby things.

NURSE #2

There's enough formula in there for one feeding, plus instructions on how to make it.

BILLIE

I have plenty myself.

CONTINUED

78. CONTINUED

78.

NURSE #2

(hands her
pamphlets)

Here's some general information
about baby care.

BILLIE

(talking to baby)

Don't worry... I'll take care of
you, won't I...?

Karlan has counted money; he pockets it and heads to the
door.

KARLAN

I'm a little pressed this morning...
but I'll be in touch.

Nurse crosses to join him.

NURSE #2

I hope you're very happy with your
new baby. *

Billie and Rossi exchange a look and the nurse and Karlan
exit quickly.

79. EXT. MOTEL - DAY

79.

Two more cars are waiting in the parking lot as Karlan and
nurse emerge. Men get out and approach them. A woman with
them goes by Karlan into the motel, followed by McIntyre.
We see the others confront Karlan, whose face tells the
whole story.

80. INT. THE MOTEL ROOM - DAY

80.

The woman we saw outside enters, followed by one of the men.

McINTYRE

Congratulations, you two. We'll
take it from here.

Woman takes baby from Billie.

McINTYRE (CONT'D)

Thanks. We've been waiting for
this chance a long time.

BILLIE

That's good. I'm glad we helped.

They start out.

CONTINUED

80. CONTINUED

80.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Take care of the baby.
(off their look)
I mean... I know you will.

*
*

McINTYRE

(reassuringly)

We will.

*

Billie and Rossi watch them as they go out with the baby.

CUT TO:

81. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

81.

Billie and Rossi are by Lou's desk. He is reading their copy.

LOU

It's good, Billie...darned good.

BILLIE

Thanks.

ROSSI

Thanks.

Lou and Billie both give him a look. Then Lou turns back to Billie.

LOU

What happened to the kid?

BILLIE

Already placed. They seem like nice people. I checked them out.
(off their look)

Well, you know... It's part of the story.

LOU

What was it? Boy or girl?

BILLIE

(a little sheepish at not knowing)

They took it away so fast...

ROSSI

It was a girl.
(beat)

A good reporter always checks.

As he saunters away, Billie grentions.

*
*

FADE OUT.

THE END