

BOUND

by

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FADE IN:

Inside a closet.

It is a large closet with double doors, a crisp line of light cutting down through the center of the darkness.

As we begin to descend, we hear a man's stern voice.

MAN (V.O.)

I know your type. Your type is dangerous.

We move past a shelf filled with hat boxes and hand bags. It is a woman's closet.

MAN (V.O.)

You know how to act, how to pretend but all the time you're waiting, just waiting.

We glide over the tightly packed hangers, close enough to feel the different fabrics and descend past the dresses to the racks of high heels.

MAN (V.O.)

I've told you before that there is no such thing as an ex-con like there is no such thing as an ex-alcoholic.

We slide along the delicate taper of a stiletto heel and reach the bottom of the closet where we find a pair of black Doc Marten boots that are tied together with a white rope.

MAN (V.O.)

There are those who stay on the wagon, those who fall off the wagon and those who jump.

We move up the boots and we see it is a woman that is bound, lying motionless on the floor of the closet, the rope coiling tightly around her wrists.

MAN (V.O.)

You? You're a jumper.

The crack at the bottom of the door lights her face. She is gagged and unconscious, a trickle of blood running down her forehead. Her name is Corky.

MAN (V.O.)

Are you listening to me?

CUT TO:

INT. PAROLE OFFICE

It is a small cramped office, manila folders piled everywhere.

OFFICER

You had better listen to me.

At the desk is a large man with a serious expression on his face as he lectures. A patch on the shoulder of his uniform reads, "PROBATION OFFICER".

CORKY

I'm listening.

Sitting across from him who we now see in full light, is Corky, a very butch looking woman with short hair and a black leather jacket. She is a lesbian and she wants people to know it.

OFFICER

Bullshit. Your kind never listens. I've seen that same look in a hundred different eyes. Every one of them looking for the same thing, dreaming about that perfect score.

Corky looks down, examining her fingernails.

OFFICER

I can tell you right now what's going to happen. Something will come along. It always does and it will be irresistible. Like a wet dream.

An office slogan behind her reads, "Play It Straight!"

OFFICER

It will hurt you day and night and tie you in knots. You'll figure it a thousand ways and when you think you know it inside and out you will jump.

She does not look at him, but she hears what he says.

OFFICER

If you hear one thing in this office, hear this: no matter how smart you are, no matter how careful you are, you will fuck up.

Corky looks up and eyes the man.

OFFICER

And when you do get caught --

INT. ELEVATOR

Corky is standing against the back of the elevator as the doors begin to close.

OFFICER (V.O.)

This time it will be life.

The doors begin to slide shut when a woman yells.

WOMAN

Wait! Hold the elevator.

Corky pushes the "open" button. A couple steps into the elevator.

His name is Ceasar, a middle-aged Italian, wearing an expensive suit and sunglasses.

She is Violet; a piece of sexual candy that would melt in your mouth.

From her tight dress to her high heels, she is on the surface, the exact opposite of Corky.

Violet smiles at her.

VIOLET

Thank you.

In his own world, Ceasar does not even see Corky.

As the elevator begins to rise, Violet catches Corky admiring the curve of her dress.

Corky does not look away, instead she stares straight into Violet's eyes.

Violet stares back, a faint smile on her painted lips. It is awkward at first, the tension between them escalating.

The doors "ding" and glide open.

Violet slowly turns and steps into the hall just behind Ceasar.

Corky follows them down the hall.

INT. HALL

They reach the door at the end of the hall. Ceasar opens it and enters. Just before Violet steps inside, she peeks over her shoulder and sees --

Corky look away.

Violet smiles and steps inside.

Corky checks the room numbers, stopping in front of the apartment next to the one Violet and Ceasar entered.

She slides the key in and opens the door.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

It is later. All of Corky's tools are gathered in the middle of the living room.

The apartment is cavernous and looks like someone recently moved out: cracks in the wall, picture hooks, hangers, and other discarded junk.

Corky is on the phone.

CORKY

I looked over everything sir, and I don't think there will be any problems... yes, I checked the tub and I'm pretty sure I can rod it out.

She suddenly turns when she hears something that sounds like a man moan.

CORKY

Yeah, I ordered the vanity. And you want latex eggshell on the walls, right?

She looks at the blank white wall separating this apartment from Ceasar's apartment.

CORKY

All right, sure. I'm going to start first thing in the morning.

She hears it again, a guttural sound.

CORKY

Thanks again for this opportunity,
Mr. Bianchinni. Goodbye.

She hangs up the phone and walks toward the wall.

As she gets closer, we hear a bed rocking, tapping against the wall.

The man's breathing grows more and more labored until finally it swells --

DISSOLVING INTO:

INT. BATHROOM - MORNING

The whining motor of a high powered drain-rod.

The spiral cable whips wildly, spiraling deeper into the tub drain, black goo splattering everywhere.

The machine is so loud Corky almost cannot hear someone pounding on the apartment door.

Killing the motor, she stands and goes to the door.

Behind the door is Violet, wearing jeans, a white T-shirt and cowboy boots.

VIOLET

Hi. My name is Violet. We sort
of met in the elevator --

CORKY

Yeah, sure. I'm Corky.

VIOLET

I heard you working in here and I
just wondered if you'd like a cup
of coffee?

She is holding two cups of coffee: one black, one with cream.

CORKY

Sure. Come on in. Give me a
minute.

Violet steps inside as Corky goes back to the bathroom to wash off the drain dreck.

VIOLET

What happened to Rajeev?

Corky calls from the bathroom, scrubbing her hands vigorously.

CORKY

Who?

VIOLET

Rajeev, the man who usually works on the building.

CORKY

Oh, he went home to India, but as far as I know he'll be back.

She wipes her hands on her overalls, returning to the main room.

VIOLET

So this is temporary for you?

CORKY

Pretty much. One day at a time.

Violet hands her the cup of black coffee.

VIOLET

I guessed you were straight black.

CORKY

Good guess.

They both sip from the piping hot mugs.

CORKY

Mmmm... thanks, I needed this.

VIOLET

My pleasure... but to be honest, I did have a slightly ulterior motive here. I was wondering if I could ask a small favor?

CORKY

A favor?

VIOLET

Yeah, see, I'm kind of a night person, so I was wondering if it wasn't a terrible inconvenience if you could wait a bit before using power tools.

CORKY

Oh, I'm sorry --

VIOLET

No, it isn't your fault. The walls here are just so thin.

CORKY

Are they really?

VIOLET

Yes, it really causes problems. Sometimes it's like you're in the same room. But if it's too much trouble, I understand...

CORKY

No, no trouble. There's other work to do.

VIOLET

You're doing everything yourself?

CORKY

Yeah.

VIOLET

That is so amazing. I'm in awe of people who can fix things. My dad was like that. We never had anything new. Whenever something broke he would open it up, tinker with it and it would work. His hands were magic.

She looks at Corky's hands cupped around the mug.

VIOLET

Yeah... I bet your car is twenty years old.

Corky smiles.

CORKY

Truck.

VIOLET

Truck. Of course.

CORKY

'74 Chevy.

VIOLET

I knew it.

Violet sips.

VIOLET

So, how do you know the owner, Mr. Bianchini?

CORKY

I don't, really. I was referred to him.

VIOLET

Oh, really.

Corky suddenly feels she has revealed something.

CORKY

Do you know him?

VIOLET

No, but Ceasar does. He likes him. Says he's a good Italian.

CORKY

Ceasar is your husband?

VIOLET

Oh no, no. I'm not the marrying kind.

Smiling, she says nothing else.

VIOLET

I should be going. You can drop the cup off anytime.

CORKY

Thanks.

VIOLET

My pleasure.

Corky watches her leave.

EXT. THE WATERING HOLE - NIGHT

A dirty bar hidden away on a dark street, its cracked, moon white sign the only evidence it exists.

A couple of large motorcycles are parked in front.

INT. THE WATERING HOLE - NIGHT

The smell of leather and cigarette smoke fills Corky's nose as she crosses to the bar.

BARTENDER

Well, well...

Corky sits as the fat bartender waddles over.

BARTENDER

Been awhile, Cork.

CORKY

Five years, two months, sixteen days. How you doing, Sue?

Corky puts a cigarette in her mouth and lights it.

SUE

Like shit. Now that we're all caught up, how about a drink?

Sue opens the refrigerator and pulls out two Old Styles.

CORKY

Thanks.

They click the bottles together and drink.

SUE

You got a job yet?

CORKY

Yeah. Some plumbing, painting and shit.

Sue laughs.

SUE

I mean a J-O-B. A real job.

CORKY

Not for me, Sue. I'm straight and narrow. I'm just here to get laid or drunk and hopefully both.

Corky gets off the stool.

CORKY

Thanks for the beer.

Looking around, she sees a woman alone at one of the back tables. Through the smoky din, she bears a slight resemblance to Violet.

The woman is dressed all in black, including a leather jacket.

Smiling, Corky slides into the chair beside her. There is no one smoother.

CORKY

Hi.

WOMAN

Hello.

CORKY

You know... that outfit would look great on my bedroom floor.

The woman smiles just as someone taps Corky on the shoulder.

She turns and is face to face with a large bull of a woman in a heavy leather Chicago Police jacket. She is more wide than fat.

WOMAN COP

Hey, Jesse. What's happening here?

CORKY

Nothing... yet.

WOMAN COP

Who's this?

Her coat opens as she puts her hands on her hips. A service revolver is clipped to her belt.

She squints at Corky, her head nodding in recognition.

WOMAN COP

Wait, I know you.

CORKY

I don't think so.

WOMAN COP

I didn't know you were out.

Corky smiles at the woman in black.

CORKY

When you get tired of Cagney and Lacey, come find me.

She heads for the exit.

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

The neighborhood would be politely described as "rough."
Corky parks her truck and gets out.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It is a hole but it is home.

Corky is lying on her futon staring up at the ceiling, a beer resting on her stomach; a folk singer quietly croons from the radio.

We see the ceiling, a circle of light hovering over the small desk lamp. We move in on the spot, which slowly fills up the screen until there is nothing but the white light.

Suddenly a wet paint roller loaded with white paint cuts a swath across the ceiling.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky is painting the ceiling. The folk ballad has become an angry Riot Grrrl anthem.

She is working hard, the roller sucking back and forth. Sweat covers her face.

Dropping the roller down, she reloads it in the tray when the phone rings. She stops and answers it.

CORKY

Hello? Oh, hi, Mr. Bianchinni...
yes, everything is going fine. I
got the tub drain all cleaned out.

She listens for a moment.

CORKY

What apartment?

She glances at the main wall.

CORKY

All right, all right, I guess I
could take a look. Yeah, you're
welcome, goodbye.

She hangs up and looks again at the wall, feeling...
curious.

INT. HALL

Corky knocks and after a moment Violet opens the door.

She seems surprised.

VIOLET

Oh no. Shit. I didn't know he would call you. God, you must think I'm a total nuisance.

CORKY

Not exactly.

VIOLET

I'm sorry, I usually would call Rajeev, but I didn't know what to do so I called Mr. Bianchinni.

CORKY

He said you lost something.

VIOLET

Yeah, come on in.

She steps back and Corky walks inside.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Violet leads her through the apartment. It is expensively furnished with very masculine tastes; a lot of gray and black leather.

VIOLET

I was doing some dishes and just as I pulled the stopper my earring fell in.

Corky looks at her blankly.

VIOLET

It's one of my favorites. That's why I got upset. I know it probably seems ridiculous to you.

An eyebrow goes up.

VIOLET

I'm sorry, look, forget it. I shouldn't have called...

CORKY

I told Bianchinni I would take a look. Is it that sink?

Violet nods.

She opens the sink cabinet and pulls out a pair of channel locks from her back pocket. The teeth of the channel locks open and bite onto the pressure nut.

CORKY

Do you have a pot or a bucket?

VIOLET

Sure.

She hands one down to her. Corky slides it under the curved pipe.

As she works, Corky feels herself staring at Violet, at the hem of her dress curving tightly around her thighs.

Water begins to trickle into the pan.

The nut slides loose and Corky tips the trap. Water splashes into the pan with a soft metal "tink".

VIOLET

Did you find it?

Corky fishes into gray water and pulls out the earring.

Violet screams, a huge smile on her face, half falling as she tries to hug Corky.

VIOLET

I can't believe it! You did it!

Corky leans back under and replaces the trap.

VIOLET

Thank you so much. You have to let me pay you something --

CORKY

No. Mr. Bianchinni asked me to do it. I did it.

Corky checks the drain by running the water.

VIOLET

If you won't take money, how about a drink? It's getting late. You can't work all night.

Corky eyes her for a moment.

CORKY

Okay, one drink.

VIOLET

What do you want?

CORKY

A beer?

VIOLET

A beer. Of course.

She smiles and turns to the bar.

VIOLET

Sit down.

Corky sits on the black leather couch and Violet returns with two bottles of Heineken. Corky sneers.

VIOLET

Thanks again.

They clink the bottles and swig.

VIOLET

You seem uncomfortable. Do I make you nervous, Corky?

CORKY

No.

She looks at Violet, then takes another long pull on the bottle.

VIOLET

Thirsty, maybe.

Violet smiles, her eyes again talking for her.

CORKY

Curious, maybe.

VIOLET

Curious? That's funny, I'm feeling a bit curious myself right now.

Violet notices the tattoo on Corky's arm.

VIOLET

That's a great tattoo.

She reaches over and touches it.

VIOLET

Beautiful labrys.

Corky is a bit surprised that she knows what it is. She nods, rubbing it as if trying to hide it.

VIOLET

Are you surprised that I know what it is?

CORKY

Maybe.

VIOLET

I have a tattoo, would you like to see it?

She moves closer, sliding over the leather cushions as she opens the front of her dress.

VIOLET

A woman in upstate New York did it for me.

She is not wearing a bra.

VIOLET

Here. Do you like it?

Set against the soft white skin of her breast is a bright green stemmed violet.

VIOLET

It took her all day to do it. She promised me it wouldn't hurt, but it was sore for a long time after. I couldn't even touch it.

Corky looks up from Violet's breast to her dark eyes.

VIOLET

But now I love the way it feels.

She runs her fingers softly over the slightly scarred skin.

VIOLET

Here, touch it.

Corky feels the blood pounding in her ears as Violet takes her hand and places it on her breast.

CORKY

What are you doing?

Violet looks at her.

VIOLET

Isn't it obvious? I'm trying to seduce you.

CORKY

Why?

VIOLET

Because I want to. I've wanted to since I first saw you in the elevator.

Corky watches her, trying to figure her out even as her thumb presses into Violet's nipple.

Inhaling sharply, Violet's eyes close, she can feel Corky staring at her.

VIOLET

You don't believe me. But I can prove it to you.

She takes Corky's wrist and begins pulling her hand down her body.

VIOLET

You can't believe me because of what you see...

She forces Corky's hand between her legs, up under her dress.

VIOLET

But you can believe what you feel.

Violet opens her eyes, a wanton smile on her lips.

VIOLET

You see... I've been thinking about you all day.

Corky's forearm flexes and Violet moans.

With both hands, Violet takes hold of Corky's forearm.

CORKY

You planned this whole thing?

Violet's head swims; she is unable to breathe.

CORKY

You dropped that earring down the drain on purpose, didn't you?

VIOLET

If I say yes, will you take your hand away?

CORKY

No.

VIOLET

... yes.

Now it is Corky who smiles.

Violet shivers, her thighs rubbing, her hips thrusting against Corky's hand.

VIOLET

Please, Corky... please...

Her eyes barely open.

VIOLET

... kiss me.

In a single motion, Corky takes hold of the back of her neck and covers Violet's open mouth with her own.

With her hand still stuffed between Violet's legs, Corky lays her back onto the couch as the kiss becomes more --

More desperate, more hungry until --

We hear the front door unlock and open.

CEASAR

Violet?

Violet's eyes pop open and she pushes Corky back.

CEASAR

Violet, you home?

They scramble to compose themselves.

VIOLET

Yeah. In here, C.

He comes around the corner and in the dim light sees the two figures sitting close on the couch.

CEASAR

What's this?

He mistakes Corky for a man.

CEASAR

What the fuck is this?

Violet stands as Ceasar barrels towards the couch.

VIOLET

I didn't expect --

CEASAR

What the fuck is going on?

Corky stands and turns, Ceasar suddenly realizing that she is a woman.

CEASAR

Oh, shit...

VIOLET

Ceasar, this is Corky. Corky, Ceasar.

CEASAR

I'm sorry, Christ, I thought...
it's fucking dark in here.

He reaches to the wall for the lights.

VIOLET

She is working for Bianchinni.

Ceasar extends his hand.

CEASAR

Oh, right, right. Don mentioned
that to me. Hi, welcome to the
family.

Corky shakes his hand.

CEASAR

You're helping Rajeev?

CORKY

No. Rajeev's in India.

VIOLET

She's doing the work herself.

CEASAR

No shit. Bianchinni hired you?
You know he's a good friend of
mine. Family, really.

CORKY

That's what Violet said.

He looks at her as if he knows something.

CEASAR

So, you just got out?

VIOLET

Jesus, Ceasar!

CEASAR

What? It ain't no big fuckin'
deal. I know who Don hires. Did
you know he did time himself?

Corky shakes her head.

CEASAR

Thirteen fucking years. See, there
ain't no secrets here.

Corky doesn't like this man.

CEASAR

How many you'd do?

CORKY

Five.

He whistles.

CEASAR

Not bad. What for?

VIOLET

That's none of your goddamn business
Ceasar.

CEASAR

You're right. You don't have to
tell me, if you don't want to. I
just hope you understand you're
among good people here.

He reaches into his pocket and pulls out a thick fold of
money and peels several hundreds. Corky stares at it.

CEASAR

Come on, come on. If you understand what I'm talking about you're going to take the money. If you don't, I'm going to have to worry about you.

Corky takes it. Ceasar smiles.

CEASAR

Good. I hate to worry. I got ulcers.

CORKY

I should be going.

CEASAR

What? How about a drink?

CORKY

My brushes, I have to clean my brushes. Thanks though.

CEASAR

Another time.

CORKY

Sure.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Close on the paintbrush, Corky's fingers pushing through and separating the black bristles under the running water.

When the brush is clean, she flicks it dry and resets the edge.

She goes to the sink to wash her hands when she stops, noticing her left hand.

It is the hand that was between Violet's legs.

She is about to smell her finger when she sees herself in the mirror.

CORKY

What are you doing?

She drops her hand.

CORKY

What am I doing? I'm fucking up, that's what I'm doing.

She scrubs her hands clean.

EXT. PARKING LOT

It is late, the area burnished with amber street light. Corky walks from the building to her truck.

She climbs inside and slides the key into the ignition when suddenly the passenger door opens and --

Violet gets in. Stunned, Corky stares at her.

VIOLET

I had to see you.

CORKY

Look, I don't think this is a good idea.

VIOLET

I wanted to apologize.

CORKY

Don't apologize, please. I can't stand women who apologize for wanting sex.

Violet smiles.

VIOLET

I'm not apologizing for what I did --

She slides across the seat.

VIOLET

I'm apologizing for what I didn't do.

She kisses Corky, and if Corky is trying to resist, we can't tell.

The windshield is beginning to steam when Violet, panting, breaks the kiss.

VIOLET

Do you have a bed somewhere?

Unable to speak, Corky reaches over and starts the engine.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT

The sex.

There is nothing flower-scented or out-of-focus about it.

It is sweaty, slippery, body-grinding, bed-squeaking
lesbian sex --

Pungent and potent --

And when it is over, neither woman can move.

Finally, Corky's eyes flutter open.

CORKY

I can see again.

Violet smiles.

Slowly, Corky gets up and goes to the fridge. She grabs
a beer and presses it to her sweating forehead.

After a moment, she lowers it, gently pressing the cold
can elsewhere. Eyes closed, she lets out a long "ahh".

Violet hears the sizzle-pop of the beer as Corky returns
to the bed.

She holds the beer to Violet's lips and tilts the can,
watching Violet's throat as she drinks.

Violet's eyes open.

VIOLET

... I needed that.

CORKY

Tell me about it.

Corky hands her the beer as Violet sits up a bit.

CORKY

Ceasar's Mafia, isn't he?

VIOLET

You have to ask?

CORKY

No.

VIOLET

Funny, nobody calls it that anymore.
Ceasar calls it "The Business".

CORKY

How did you meet him?

VIOLET

They took over a club I was working at. Ceasar started managing it.

CORKY

He's a launderer?

VIOLET

Basically.

CORKY

How long have you been with him?

VIOLET

Almost five years.

CORKY

Five years is a long time.

VIOLET

Yes it is.

Corky stares at her beer. She knows what Violet is thinking.

CORKY

The re-distribution of wealth.

VIOLET

What?

CORKY

Isn't that what you wanted to know? What I did time for?

VIOLET

The re-distribution of wealth?

CORKY

That's what I tell someone when I'm trying to get them in my bed.

VIOLET

I'm already in your bed.

CORKY

My cellmate would say she did her time for getting caught. She was always more honest than me.

Corky sips her beer.

CORKY

I started stealing when I was little. We were piss poor, which is not an excuse, just a fact.

It isn't like her to talk about this, especially with someone she just met.

CORKY

The first time I remember so vividly. A bunch of us kids were at Waxman's Drugstore, when Mr. Waxman, who was a mean old prick, always worrying about us robbing him, dropped a roll of quarters.

We can almost hear the coins tinkling on the tile floor.

CORKY

I can still hear that sound, those quarters, because right then something clicked inside of me. Some instinct took over and as everyone, including Waxman, dove down, I reached up and emptied the cash register.

Violet smiles. She likes this woman.

CORKY

I gave most of the money to my mom. I told her I found it at the train yard. She was so happy she cried, calling me her lucky charm. Fifteen years later, I guess my luck ran out.

She swallows that with beer.

CORKY

Sometimes I tell myself that I didn't have a choice, that stealing was surviving. Usually I can admit that's bullshit. I did it because it was a way out. It was easy and I was good at it, real good.

She glances at Violet.

CORKY

I don't usually talk this much. I guess I have been rehabilitated.

Violet laughs.

VIOLET

You didn't have to tell me if you didn't want to.

CORKY

I guess I wanted to.

VIOLET

I'm glad you did.

CORKY

So am I.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Corky gets out of her truck carrying her tools. Grinning like someone who has been well-laid, she whistles off to work.

INT. LOBBY

Between the main doors she sees a man. His name is Shelly and he is an over-dressed accountant.

He is very nervous, talking to someone through the intercom.

Shelly I know he's gone. Please. I have to talk to you.

Fiddling with her keys, Corky recognizes the voice that answers him.

VIOLET (V.O.)

What do you want, Shelly?

Shelly glances over his shoulder at Corky, answering in a hushed voice.

Shelly I have to leave. Tonight.

For a moment the intercom is silent. Then the door buzzes and Shelly pushes inside. Corky follows him to the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR

Corky stares at Shelly like she is considering beating the crap out of him. She isn't sure why but she knows it would make her feel better.

Shelly hides behind his sunglasses watching the elevator numbers go up. The doors open and he scurries out.

INT. HALL

She watches him enter Ceasar's apartment, her smile now completely gone.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

It is later. Through the wall we listen to the same sound as before of two people making love. We drop down and find Corky's brush, still wet with paint, abandoned in her tray.

INT. BEDROOM

Her face glistening with sweat, Violet climaxes, letting the orgasm spread through her like melting butter.

VIOLET

I had this image of you, inside of me...

She flattens her palms against the soft cradle of her pelvis.

VIOLET

Like a part of me...

As she opens her eyes, we see that her lover is Corky. Violet watches as she gets off the bed and begins to get dressed.

VIOLET

You are so beautiful.

Corky does not answer as she yanks her pants on. Violet sits up. She can feel that something is wrong.

VIOLET

What's wrong?

CORKY

Nothing.

Violet pulls the sheet around her.

VIOLET

Yes there is. I felt it this morning when I brought you the coffee.

CORKY

Shit, here we go.

VIOLET

You didn't want to see me, did you?

CORKY

If there is one thing I can't stand about sleeping with women, it's all the fucking mind reading.

VIOLET

What are you afraid of?

CORKY

I'm not afraid of anything.

VIOLET

I don't understand --

CORKY

I know! You can't understand, because we're different, Violet. We're different.

VIOLET

We're not that different Corky.

CORKY

How can you sit in that bed and say that?

VIOLET

Because it's the truth.

CORKY

Let me guess. This is where you tell me that what matters is on the inside. That inside you, there is a little dyke just like me?

VIOLET

Oh no, she's nothing like you. She's a lot smarter than you.

CORKY

Is that what her daddy tells her?

VIOLET

I know what I am. I don't need to have it tattooed on my shoulder.

CORKY

What are you saying? That you don't have sex with men?

VIOLET

I don't.

CORKY

For Christ's sake, Violet! I heard you! Thin walls, remember?

VIOLET

What you heard wasn't sex.

CORKY

What the fuck was it?

VIOLET

All my life, everyone has been telling me that when I have sex, I'm not really having sex. Not real sex. But they're wrong. I know what is and isn't sex and what you heard was definitely not sex.

CORKY

What was it then?

VIOLET

Work.

That knocks Corky back.

VIOLET

You made certain choices in your life that you paid for. You said you made them because you were good at something and it was easy. Do you think you're the only one that's good at something?

Violet's stare pins Corky to the wall.

VIOLET

We make our own choices and we pay our own prices. I think we're more alike than you want to admit.

CORKY

What about that guy this morning?

VIOLET

You mean Shelly?

CORKY

Don't tell me, you're a workaholic.

VIOLET

No. Shelly knows what I am. He saw me in a bar with another woman.

CORKY

I suppose he just wants to watch.

That's all Violet can take.

VIOLET

Fuck it! I think you better leave.

CORKY

I think so too.

Violet turns away.

VIOLET

Try not to steal anything on the way out.

That stings but Corky walks out without looking back.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

It is dark now. Corky is standing above the paint tray that has skinned over. She picks up the brush. It is dry with paint.

CORKY

Shit.

She throws the brush across the room.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

The rusty Chevy glides to a stop in a parking space near the service entrance. In its payload is a boxed bathroom vanity and sink.

Corky climbs out of the cab and into the back, unhooking the bungee cords that hold down the boxes.

She looks up as a black Lincoln Town Car screeches into a spot not far from her truck. Three serious looking men get out, leading a fourth, Shelly.

He is the only one who seems to notice Corky.

They enter the building, the door closing behind them.

INT. BATHROOM

Corky's legs jut out from the old wicker vanity as she finishes detaching its anchors and pipe work.

She stands giving it a yank and pulling it away from the wall when voices begin to filter in from the next door apartment.

She listens, a rising string of warbling sobs drowned out by an angry voice.

ANGRY VOICE

Shut the fuck up! You piece of
shit!

We hear a scream.

ANGRY VOICE

You're going to tell us! You're
going to fuckin' tell us! just a
matter of fuckin' time!

Each sentence is punctuated with grunts and thuds.

ANGRY VOICE

Where is it? Where the fuck is
it?!

We begin to close in on Corky as she listens to each thud, watching something that disturbs her.

ANGRY VOICE

You shit! You piece of shit!

With each thud the water in the toilet shimmers like a struck cymbal. As we move closer, the sound swells until --

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CEASAR'S BATHROOM

Where blood splatters the toilet, heavy drops hitting the water and spreading like inverted mushroom clouds.

ANGRY VOICE

Did that hurt? News flash, fucko:
I'm just getting started.

The angry voice belongs to Johnnie Marconi. Shelly is kneeling in front of the toilet, hands tied behind his back with electrical wire.

Johnnie Marconi is a flashy young man in Armani slacks, silk shirt and silver-tipped cowboy boots. His tie is tucked in as if torture were a fine dining experience.

Cesar and two other men are crammed in the small bathroom.

JOHNNIE

You got nerve trying to fuck us!
Nobody fucks me! Nobody fucks my
father! Nobody! Nobody!

Shelly screams as Johnnie repeatedly rams his face into the toilet.

CEASAR

Whoa, whoa. Come on, he's making
too much noise.

JOHNNIE

You hear that, bitch? Be quiet!

CEASAR

Here, put this in his mouth.

Cesar hands a towel to Johnnie, who stuffs it into Shelly's mouth.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Like Corky, Violet can hear the beating. She is trying to block it out but cannot.

Standing at the bar, she runs the blender, grinding ice cubes, trying to drown out the sounds of the bathroom.

The bathroom door opens.

JOHNNIE

Prick! I can go all night! All
night!

Cesar steps out, shutting the door, masking the sounds behind him. Violet moves towards him.

VIOLET

Cesar, I'm leaving.

CEASAR

What? Oh come on, I didn't use
one of the good towels.

The door opens again as someone else steps out.

VIOLET

Ceasar, I'm serious. This is too much. I have to get out of here.

CEASAR

Why? 'Cause you know him?

She nods.

CEASAR

You women are so fucking sensitive.

He takes hold of her.

CEASAR

But I don't want you to go. I like you here. You know this isn't easy for me either.

He embraces her. Over his shoulder she sees Mickey Malnati in the hallway, staring at her.

He is an older man, hair graying, built like a fire plug. Sinewy mass strains at his Brooks Brothers' suit.

CEASAR

Now, why don't you go watch some TV or something?

MICKEY

Are you okay, Violet?

CEASAR

Mickey, why is Johnnie here? You know how I feel about that fucking psycho.

Mickey continues to stare at Violet, who looks up at him with her big, doe eyes.

MICKEY

Ceasar, didn't I tell you to get something?

CEASAR

Sure, Mickey. Sure.

He goes to the kitchen.

Mickey moves closer to Violet, lifting her chin the way a father would do to his little girl.

MICKEY

You shouldn't have to see this.
Why don't you get out of here? Go
for a walk.

VIOLET

Ceasar wants me to stay.

MICKEY

Don't worry about Ceasar. I'll
handle Ceasar. You just get out
of here, okay?

She smiles.

VIOLET

Thanks, Mickey.

Ceasar returns from the kitchen. He is holding a pair of
tin snips. Mickey takes them.

MICKEY

Thanks, C. Now let's end this
thing.

Violet watches them return to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Mickey takes off his coat and hands it to a large man
named Lou. He slaps Johnnie on the back.

MICKEY

Hey, Johnnie, ease up, okay.

Johnnie hits Shelly once more.

JOHNNIE

Prick.

Mickey kneels down next to Shelly's ear and motions to
Lou who lifts Shelly's bound arms, holding his hand over
the toilet bowl.

MICKEY

Shelly, I'm going to ask you ten
times. You understand? Ten times.

Mickey grabs Shelly's pinkie finger, putting it between
the metal blades.

MICKEY

One. Where is our money?

Shelly whimpers, red-faced and sobbing.

There is a sick crunch and Shelly howls into his gag. His severed finger plunks into the toilet and floats to the bottom.

INT. BATHROOM

Corky can't stand it anymore. She throws her tools down, leaves the bathroom and finds --

Violet waiting in the main room. Both women stand apart in silence.

Violet seems on the verge of saying something but doesn't know how to start. Her lip begins to quiver, her eyes search the room returning to Corky each time.

The violence in the next room can still be heard.

CORKY

Violet? Are you all right?

Almost unnoticeably, Violet shakes her head. Corky puts her arm around her.

CORKY

Come on. Let's go.

EXT. BAR

An upscale bar in the same neighborhood.

INT. BAR

It is the kind of bar businessmen drink in the afternoon. Dark wood and padded leather.

Corky and Violet, the only women in the room, sit close together at a far corner table.

Violet's voice is hushed.

VIOLET

Shelly was skimming from the business. He came to see me yesterday because he was afraid Ceasar figured it out. He wanted to run but he wanted me to come with him.

CORKY

Even though he knew about you?

VIOLET

Yes.

CORKY

He was in love with you, right?

VIOLET

That's what he told himself. But it wasn't even about me, it was about Ceasar. He wanted what Ceasar had. That's how they are. I understand them.

She glances around the room; a man at the bar smiles at her.

VIOLET

For Shelly, taking the money was a way to take from Ceasar. He could have run at any time, but he didn't because he didn't want out.

CORKY

Sounds like he wanted to get caught.

VIOLET

Maybe he did. He would brag to me all the time. He was never afraid of Ceasar because he didn't know him. Not like I do.

Two men sit down near them, laughing.

VIOLET

Ceasar lives for these moments. He tells me it's just the business but I know it's more than that. He likes it. The violence. I'll catch him in the bathroom mirror touching his scars. He says they remind him who he his. They're all like that. Except maybe Mickey.

CORKY

Mickey?

VIOLET

He's the part of the business that the rest of them pretend to be. But Mickey doesn't like it like they do. I suppose that's why he's good at it.

Violet stares at her glass, at the melting ice.

VIOLET

I used to be able to block it out.
I would tell myself that I wasn't
really there so nothing really
mattered. But I can't do it
anymore.

She downs the last of her drink.

VIOLET

I've been making the same mistake
Shelly made. But now I know what
I want.

She turns to Corky.

VIOLET

I want out. I want a new life. I
see what I've been waiting for,
but I need you, Corky.

CORKY

For what?

VIOLET

You made a choice once. Do you
think you would make that same
choice again?

CORKY

What choice?

VIOLET

If those quarters fell to the floor,
would you still reach up to that
cash register?

Corky stares at her, knowing where this is going. She
glances around the crowded bar.

CORKY

Not here.

We glide past a sign on a door that reads, "Women's Room".

INT. WOMEN'S ROOM

We move over the top of the far stall and find Corky and
Violet.

VIOLET

Ceasar is going to get the money
and bring --

CORKY

How much money?

VIOLET

Shelly said it was over two million dollars.

Corky quietly swallows that pill.

VIOLET

Ceasar will bring it to the apartment to count and go through Shelly's books to figure out how he did it.

CORKY

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. Do you have any idea what you are saying? You are asking me to help you fuck the mob.

Violet nods.

CORKY

These people are serious, Violet. If you want to know how serious, ask Shelly. They're worse than any cop because they have lots of money and no rules. You fuck them, you've got to do it right.

VIOLET

That's why I need your help. You said you were good.

CORKY

I am, but...

She knows Violet is challenging her.

CORKY

All right, let's say for the moment that I believe everything you are saying.

VIOLET

You think I'm lying?

CORKY

I didn't say that, but since you did, let's say that you are. It would have been easy to set Shelly up.

(MORE)

CORKY (CONT'D)

You could have got him killed
knowing that Ceasar would bring
the money to the apartment.

Violet stares, her face poker-blank.

CORKY

All you would need to keep yourself
clean would be someone unconnected,
someone like me.

VIOLET

Is that what you think?

CORKY

I'm just making a point. You have
no idea what you're asking. How
much trust two people need to do
something like this.

She moves closer to Violet.

CORKY

For me, stealing is a lot like
sex. Two people that want the
same thing sit in a room and they
talk, they start to plan and it's
like flirting, a kind of foreplay,
because the more they talk about
it, the wetter they get.

She stops.

CORKY

The difference is, I can have sex
with someone I just met, someone I
hardly know, but to steal I need
to know someone like I know myself.

VIOLET

Do you think you know me like that?

CORKY

I think...

They are close enough to kiss.

CORKY

We're going to find out.

Corky pulls back.

CORKY

But first, I want to see this money.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Violet springs from the couch as the front door crashes open, Ceasar charging in. He is doubled over clutching something to his stomach.

He rushes to the kitchen dumping a bloody bundle into the double sink. There is blood everywhere, smeared up and down Ceasar's front.

VIOLET

Oh my god...

Violet takes a step toward him unsure of what has happened.

CEASAR

Don't worry. It ain't mine.

He pulls a bottle of whiskey and a glass from the cupboard.

VIOLET

Ceasar, what happened?

CEASAR

It was unbelievable! Un-fucking-believable!

He pours himself a shot belting it back.

CEASAR

Goddamnit, look at this shirt!
It's ruined!

He begins unbuttoning the bloody shirt.

CEASAR

It started when Shelly took us to the money. I tell you, Mickey Malnati knows his shit, he does. Shelly takes us right there.

He throws down another shot.

CEASAR

So Shelly's down on his knees and he's pulling out this bag of money from a safe in the floor and I'm staring at it like "holy fuck!" I mean look at it --

He tears open the bloody bag, wet money bricks spilling out.

CEASAR

And all I can think is how the fuck did he do this when -- Bang! Johnnie caps him. Blood sprays everywhere, all over the money. We've no idea if this is even all of it.

Cesar is exasperated.

CEASAR

And right then I go through the roof and -- Boom! I belt the dumb fuck as hard as I can. I didn't care who's son he was I just wanted to hit him again. Knock some sense into that dumb son of a bitch.

He looks at the pile of bloody money.

CEASAR

Just look at this mess I got to deal with.

VIOLET

What are you going to do with it?

CEASAR

I told them to run it through the cycles. But I guess Gino has plans for it because he's coming here tomorrow night to pick this shit up.

Searching through a sink cabinet, he can't find what he needs.

CEASAR

Where the hell's the laundry detergent?

VIOLET

Ummm... in the linen closet.

Cesar walks down the hall to the bathroom. Violet's eyes do not move from the pile of money.

Corky seems to come from nowhere. She whispers.

CORKY

Come to my place in the morning.
Early, okay?

Violet nods.

INT. CLOSET

Corky's hands twitch, and then flex against the ropes that bind them.

A reflex echoes through her body, muscles spasm and limbs jerk against their bonds.

As if in a dream, she struggles trying to get free, fighting toward the edge of consciousness until --

She seems to succumb, slipping back into stillness.

We move toward her face, her closed eyes as we again hear the voices in her head.

VIOLET (V.O.)

You're having second thoughts.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Violet is on the bed, Corky at the window.

CORKY

... no.

She turns to Violet.

CORKY

You said he washed the money?

VIOLET

Yeah.

CORKY

Then what? Exactly.

VIOLET

He hung it up.

CORKY

What?

VIOLET

To let it dry.

She begins to focus on the memory.

VIOLET

It was unreal...

Moving in on her face.

MATCH CUT TO:

Benjamin Franklin's face on a hundred dollar bill.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Franklin's face rotates as we pull back seeing rows of bills carefully paper-clipped to lines of string.

VIOLET (V.O.)

Hundreds, paper-clipped everywhere
like leaves.

Eyes filled with green, Violet turns inside the laundry lines of money until she sees Ceasar.

Wearing his undershirt, he is across the room standing at the ironing board, ironing every single bill.

He seems to have one eye on her, one eye on his work.

VIOLET (V.O.)

Then one by one, he ironed all of
it.

He sprays starch across several bills and presses the steaming iron to them.

CORKY (V.O.)

Did he sleep?

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Violet is in bed, unable to sleep, listening to the machine-shuffle of Ceasar's bill counter.

VIOLET (V.O.)

No. But neither did I.

We move past her, floating toward the wall.

VIOLET (V.O.)

All night long I listened to that
sound.

INT. OFFICE

We drift across Ceasar's desk, past bricks of bound bills as Ceasar folds the paper tape around another stack.

CORKY (V.O.)

What sound?

He hits the counter again and we hear the sound, now very loud as hundreds blur by, fluttering beneath us.

VIOLET (V.O.)

The sound of money.

The sound rolls into thunder --

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT

That seems to shake the apartment.

CORKY

And where is it now?

VIOLET

In his office. I saw it this morning.

INT. OFFICE

Violet cautiously enters the office with a cup of coffee.

Working furiously at the computer, Ceasar jumps when he sees her, bloodshot eyes animal wide.

He checks his watch as she sets the coffee in front of him.

VIOLET

I need to go to the store.

He nods automatically, back in his work, as she sees the briefcase filled with perfect rows of hundreds.

VIOLET (V.O.)

It's in a case, on his desk.

CORKY (V.O.)

Does the case lock?

We see the open top with its silver flip-over locks.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT

Violet is trying to remember.

VIOLET

Yes.

CORKY

Good.

Corky begins to pace, ordering the information in her head.

CORKY

All right, now, tell me about Johnnie.

VIOLET

Johnnie?

CORKY

It sounded like he and Ceasar don't like each other.

VIOLET

Like each other? They hate each other.

CORKY

Why?

VIOLET

It started way before I was around. I think basically it's because he thinks Johnnie is a complete idiot. But Johnnie runs Chicago because Gino is his father.

CORKY

Who is Gino?

Violet suddenly feels that she has made a mistake.

VIOLET

Gino Marconi.

CORKY

Marconi? As in Angelo Marconi, head of the Marconi family?

VIOLET

That's his brother.

CORKY

... shit.

Corky covers her mouth.

CORKY

Gino Marconi is coming tonight to pick up the money?

VIOLET

Yeah.

CORKY

And Johnnie is his son, that's
Johnnie Marconi?

VIOLET

Yeah.

CORKY

Sweet Jesus.

Eyes wide, she paces, pulling at her lip, mumbling.

Suddenly she freezes as it clicks into place. She looks
at Violet.

CORKY

It's perfect.

She's pacing again.

CORKY

Gino Marconi is coming to your
apartment. It's a big deal, isn't
it? That means Ceasar will be
ready. He doesn't want to look
like an idiot. Gino has been there
before?

VIOLET

Yeah, twice.

CORKY

What happened?

VIOLET

Not much, really. Ceasar was
nervous, kept cleaning the
apartment. The first time, he
picked out the dress he wanted me
to wear.

Something occurs to Corky.

CORKY

Does Johnnie hit on you?

VIOLET

Johnnie hits on anything in high
heels.

CORKY

Has Ceasar ever seen him?

VIOLET

He does it right in front of him.

CORKY

It's getting better and better.
Keep going.

VIOLET

Gino doesn't know English, or at least he pretends he doesn't, so he doesn't talk much. He gets right to the point. Both times they talked for about five minutes, had one drink and then they left.

CORKY

What did Gino drink?

VIOLET

Scotch, Glenlivet. I remember that Ceasar made a huge deal about it.

Corky smiles, the wheels rolling.

CORKY

All right...

She turns from the window and gets onto the bed.

CORKY

I have an idea to make this work.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Violet is getting dressed, lining her lips with lip-pencil.

CORKY (V.O.)

You'll go back and get ready, take your time, make it real.

As she works on her face we see the room behind her and the discarded dresses scattered about.

CORKY (V.O.)

The more attractive you are, the more believable it will be.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT

Corky breaks her thought-train.

CORKY

What time did you say they would be there?

VIOLET

The plane is in at 7:00, so I'd say about 8:00.

CORKY

Any bodyguards?

VIOLET

Gino travels with a big man named Roy. Ceasar calls him the driver.

CORKY

Fine.

INT. OFFICE

Ceasar again checks his watch.

CORKY (V.O.)

At some point Ceasar is going to quit. I'd guess sometime around six, making sure he's got time to get ready.

The watch reads 6:10. Ceasar rubs his eyes, his temples.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Violet is at the bar in a sexy dress and high heels.

CEASAR

Un-fucking-believable, what this guy did. Shelly is one smart-ass mutherfucker, I mean, he was one smart-ass mutherfucker.

He laughs as Violet smiles handing him an enormous drink.

CORKY (V.O.)

As soon as he is done, you'll be right there to put a big drink in his hand.

He takes the drink.

CORKY (V.O.)

We want him to come down, to relax,
feel in control again.

VIOLET

Poor boy, has to work so hard.

She gives him a woman's sympathy pout, he knows what it is, loves it anyway.

Smiling, he slides his hand down over her ass.

CEASAR

You look good enough to eat.

She smiles and waits for the kiss she knows is coming.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT

Both women are starting to feel it, to believe it.

VIOLET

Where will you be?

CORKY

Waiting in the apartment next door.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky sits on the floor of the dark apartment. She has taken off her boots which are beside her.

VIOLET (V.O.)

Waiting for what?

Through the wall we can hear the shower.

CORKY (V.O.)

For the shower. That will be our signal.

Corky opens a thin box filled with needle-thin lock picks.

She selects several and slips them into her multi-pierced ears like earrings.

CORKY (V.O.)

When he's done with his shower,
you will go to the bar.

INT. BATHROOM

In slow motion Ceasar drops the shower plunger and water chokes from the faucet.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Behind the bar, Violet pulls out the bottle of Glenlivet.

CORKY (V.O.)

You'll get out the scotch that
Gino drinks.

She steps out from the bar, her eyes on the bedroom when
the bottle slips from her hands.

We watch it slowly fall --

CORKY (V.O.)

And as you do, the bottle will
slip from your hands.

And shatter against the hardwood floor.

CORKY (V.O.)

An accident.

VIOLET

Shit! Oh shit!

Cesar yells from the bathroom.

CEASAR (V.O.)

What happened?!

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Hearing Cesar, Corky gets up, moving quietly toward the
door.

CEASAR (V.O.)

V! What the fuck was it?! Violet?

INT LIVING ROOM

Cesar enters, a towel wrapped around him, hair still
dripping.

CEASAR

V, what? You can't hear me?

Violet looks terribly upset as she begins to clean up.

VIOLET

Cesar, it slipped... I was trying
to get ready...

Cesar realizing what happened.

CEASAR

Oh fucking Christ... You gotta be kidding me!

He rushes at her.

CEASAR

Fuck! Fuck! How did you... Awwww goddamnit!

VIOLET

I'm sorry. It was an accident.

She stands up.

VIOLET

Don't worry, I'll get some more.

CEASAR

There's no time.

VIOLET

Don't be silly, Ceasar. It'll take five minutes.

She turns him back toward the bedroom.

VIOLET

I'll clean this up and be back before you're even dressed.

INT. HALL

Violet opens her door, stepping into the hall where Corky is waiting.

CORKY (V.O.)

When you open the door, I'll be there.

They pass each other in silence, Violet stepping out as Corky slips in.

VIOLET (V.O.)

What if he sees you?

CORKY (V.O.)

He won't.

INT. BATHROOM

Ceasar finishes shaving, washing his face clean. His big drink is almost empty. In his reflection, he begins examining his scars.

Through the open door we see Corky moving almost casually across the living room.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT

Corky is looking for something.

VIOLET

You can't know for certain that he won't see you.

CORKY

Trust me, Violet.

She finds a black duffel bag from one of her tool buckets.

VIOLET

I'm just asking, what if?

CORKY

If, he does...

She opens a dresser and unwraps a gun.

CORKY

Then I won't have a choice, will I?

She tosses the gun on the bed.

INT. OFFICE

The black case is lying on the desk, locked shut. Corky moves around the desk, dropping down behind it.

CORKY (V.O.)

When I'm inside, I will get the money.

From her ear-lobe she chooses the right pick, sliding out the silver tool.

It takes only a second and the first lock pops open.

She is working on the other lock when the door is pushed open and Ceasar walks in.

Corky drops down, grasping for her gun --

As Ceasar, wearing only underwear, enters. He looks around finding his cigarettes on the coffee table.

The gun ready, Corky waits pressed against the desk until he leaves.

She lets her breath out, then pops the second lock, unzips the black duffel bag and quickly empties the case filling the bag with fat money bricks.

CORKY (V.O.)

I'm going to need something...

Finished, she zips up the bag and looks about.

CORKY (V.O.)

To fill the case.

VIOLET (V.O.)

Like paper?

She sees several reams of blank paper hidden near the desk.

CORKY (V.O.)

Yeah, you should hide it near the desk before you leave.

She fills the case, then closes it.

CORKY (V.O.)

At that point --

She thumbs the locks shut and they snap, unnaturally loud, into place.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT

They are both on the bed.

CORKY

There is no going back.

VIOLET

When I get the scotch how do I know you won't take off?

CORKY

The same way I'll know that you went to scotch. Trust.

Their faces are close, eyes still trying to read each other.

VIOLET

I still don't see how I'm going to get clean with the money in the apartment. Everyone will think I did it.

CORKY

Not Ceasar.

VIOLET

Why?

CORKY

Because of what you are going to tell him. You have to make it as real as you can. The moment you open the door with the scotch in your hand, you will be covered and that moment is the most important moment in the plan.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

The door bursts open. Violet enters quickly carrying a bottle in a thin brown bag.

CORKY (V.O.)

If it's real enough, he'll believe it because deep down he'll want to.

VIOLET

C! Shit, I'm sorry!

Ceasar wanders out, tightening his tie. She looks at her watch.

VIOLET

They were early.

CEASAR

What are you talking about?

VIOLET

They just left, didn't they?

CEASAR

What are you, drunk?

He smiles, grabbing the bottle from her.

VIOLET

You mean they weren't up here?

CEASAR

No! They're still on their way.

VIOLET

That doesn't make any sense.

CEASAR

Why?

VIOLET

Because I just saw Johnnie
downstairs.

Ceasar turns.

CEASAR

What?

VIOLET

I was getting out of the car when
I saw him in the Mercedes.

CEASAR

It couldn't have been.

VIOLET

It was him. I'm positive.

CEASAR

It's impossible!

VIOLET

Ceasar, I know Johnnie. It was
him. I screamed when I saw him.
I couldn't believe I missed them.
I knew you were going to be upset
so I thought I'd apologize and
give Gino the scotch. I honked a
couple of times but he didn't stop.

She watches him, her words caving in around him.

CEASAR

But Gino's plane doesn't get in
for another half-hour.

Violet thinks.

VIOLET

Actually, I didn't see Gino in the
car.

His eyes dart. His forehead beads with sweat. He turns
toward the office.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT

Violet is staring at Corky's mouth.

CORKY

If Ceasar hates Johnnie like you say, then the second he opens the case he'll know, in his gut, that Johnnie just fucked him. He'll realize that he has no choice. He can't touch Gino or Johnnie. There's only one way out.

She pauses.

CORKY

He'll have to run.

VIOLET

If he runs, everyone will assume he took the money.

CORKY

You'll be clean and we'll be rich.

INT. OFFICE

Ceasar stands over the desk, afraid to open the case.

INT. CORKY'S APARTMENT

VIOLET

Jesus, that's beautiful.

CORKY

Thank you.

VIOLET

If you're this goddamn smart, how did you ever get caught?

CORKY

Every job like this has moments where things don't go so well and everyone starts thinking about their own ass. It's in those moments that everything comes together or falls apart.

She looks dead at Violet.

CORKY

I had a partner and she fucked me.

VIOLET

I won't.

CORKY

I think we're going to find out.

INT. OFFICE

The key turns and the locks pop. When Ceasar sees the blank paper, the whole world begins to spin.

VIOLET

Ceasar?

His chest collapses onto itself while his hands ball into fists.

CEASAR

No no no no...

She moves around the side of the desk and sees the newspaper.

VIOLET

Oh god...

He slams the case shut, his head hanging down.

After a moment he looks at her, like a little boy about to cry.

CEASAR

V... I've been set up.

He seems ready to scream but can't say anything.

VIOLET

Johnnie?

The name is like water hitting hot oil.

CEASAR

That fuck! That rat-fuck! Little
shit rat-fuck!

He starts punching the desk, each blow harder than the last.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky can hear him pounding. She looks down and smiles. Between her legs is the open bag stuffed with money.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Ceasar is choking on his own rage.

VIOLET

Why? Why would Johnnie do this?

CEASAR

Jesus Christ Violet! Open your fucking eyes! Johnnie hates me like I hate him!

He starts to pound his fists against his own head.

CEASAR

I hate that little fuck! I hate him! I hate him! I should've done him!

VIOLET

But you know he did it?

CEASAR

So what?! So fucking what? Use your head Violet. The money is gone. Gino is coming here to get it. You think he's going to believe me if I tell him his piss-hole son stole it! Is that what you think? I don't. You know what I think? I think I'm a dead man. I'm one in the brain. That's what I think!

VIOLET

Cesar, what are we going to do?

He grabs hold of his chair using it to support himself

CEASAR

I know what he wants me to do. He wants me out of here. He wants me to run.

She watches him, his body rocking against the chair.

CEASAR

If I run, then everyone will think I took the money and he walks away with two million clean.

The words squeeze out like tears.

CEASAR

God, I can see him right now driving to get Gino. I can hear him laughing, fucking laughing, laughing at me.

He swings the swivel chair over his head and smashes it down on the desk. Again and again.

CEASAR

Laughing at me! Laughing at me!

The chair falls and he stands alone, covering his face to hide his tears.

VIOLET

C...

She goes to hold him.

CEASAR

Don't touch me!

He backs into the corner of the room.

CEASAR

Just leave me alone! I got to think!

Violet watches him trying to wipe the tears and sweat from his face.

CEASAR

Got to think this through...

VIOLET

Cesar, maybe we should run --

CEASAR

Violet please!

VIOLET

I mean it Cesar, forget Johnnie, forget the money, let's just go now, before it's too late --

CEASAR

Goddamnit Violet! Would you just leave me the fuck alone! Please! Leave! Now!

VIOLET

All right, Cesar.

INT. BEDROOM

Violet enters, closing the door quietly behind her. She looks at the wall, then goes to the bed and picks up the phone.

As she dials we move along the phone cord, following it down to the jack in the wall.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

We move out from another jack, following a different cord.

Corky is sitting with her back to the wall. The black phone beside her barely rings once before she answers.

She waits, saying nothing.

VIOLET (V.O.)

It's me.

CORKY

What happened?

INT. BEDROOM

Violet whispers, her hand cupped over the mouth piece.

VIOLET

He totally freaked. I've never seen him like this. He's out of his fucking mind.

CORKY (V.O.)

That's okay, as long as he believes it was Johnnie.

VIOLET

Believes it! Jesus, it's driving him crazy. He wants to kill him. I don't know, Corky, I don't know what he is going to do. I'm getting nervous, really nervous.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

CORKY

It's all right, Violet. It's working. All we got to do is wait him out and see what he does.

VIOLET (V.O.)

What if he doesn't run?

CORKY

That means he probably will kill Johnnie.

VIOLET (V.O.)

Oh, Christ, I got to get out of here!

CORKY

Listen, if he doesn't run, all you have to do is break down, go to your bedroom and pack some things, start crying, saying you love him but you can't do it. You're sorry but you have to leave and just walk out.

INT. BEDROOM

VIOLET

Okay, all right.

CORKY (V.O.)

We're almost there, Violet. Just hang on.

Violet hears him.

VIOLET

He's coming...

She hangs up quickly just as Ceasar bursts in.

CEASAR

I got it! I know what I got to do! I got to get the money.

VIOLET

The money? The money's gone.

CEASAR

No. Johnnie's got it. All I got to do is get it back.

VIOLET

But it could be anywhere.

CEASAR

He didn't have that much time. He had to pick up Gino. I bet you he's got it with him. I bet it's in the car.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky presses against the wall, trying to hear.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Cesar is pacing.

CEASAR

See, right now he doesn't know that I know, that's why he put the paper in the case. He wants me to hand the case to Gino. Then there is no doubt it was me. Gino will put a bullet in me himself. But it ain't going to happen. I won't let it! Johnnie ain't going to fuck me! Not like this! No way!

VIOLET

This is insane!

She throws open her closet.

CEASAR

What are you doing?

She grabs a suitcase from under the bed.

VIOLET

I'm leaving! This is crazy! I don't want to be involved. I don't want anything to do with this shit!

She starts yanking the dresses from the closet.

CEASAR

You can't leave.

VIOLET

The hell I can't!

CEASAR

I need you...

VIOLET

Bullshit! You don't need me! You've never needed me! I can't help you! Understand?! I have to get out.

CEASAR

Violet, I won't let you leave.

She turns and sees that he is holding a gun.

CEASAR

If you're not with me, Violet,
then I have to assume you're against
me.

VIOLET

Ceasar, this is crazy.

CEASAR

Maybe it is, maybe it isn't. Maybe
you dropped the scotch by accident.
Maybe you didn't.

Now it is her turn to feel the world spin.

CEASAR

It would have been so easy to let
him in as you went out.

VIOLET

You don't, you can't believe that...

CEASAR

I've seen the way he looks at you.
He's always wanted you. Maybe two
million dollars finally bought
you.

She slaps him hard. He stares at her.

CEASAR

I'm sorry, Violet, but it has to
be this way.

He moves past her, picks up the dresses and returns them
to the closet.

CEASAR

I hope you understand. I want to
trust you, I want to believe you,
but I don't have any other choice.

He shuts the closet.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Ceasar is at the bar, drinking the scotch. The gun in
front of him. Across the room, Violet sits staring holes
through him.

They wait in silence.

CEASAR

You sure you don't want a drink?

Violet says nothing.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

In the dark, Corky sits, her face, her posture very similar to Violet's.

She is concentrating, her mind somewhere else when the door buzzer sounds.

She turns her head and hears Ceasar faintly answering the intercom.

Corky stands just as --

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Violet stands.

Ceasar faces her for a moment, then shoves the gun into his belt behind his back.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky watches through the door peep as three men pass by.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

There is a knock and Ceasar opens the door.

Gino Marconi is an old Italian whose face is a mask of irritated indifference.

Roy, his enormous driver, is behind him.

Ceasar smiles, greeting them in Italian with open arms.

Johnnie is the last inside. He has tape over his broken nose. He smiles and hugs Ceasar.

JOHNNIE

You shouldn't have hit me.

CEASAR

You want to get into this now?

JOHNNIE

No, no Ceasar. Not now.

He smiles again patting him on the shoulder, then throwing a fake punch.

Ceasar sees Gino with his bright Italian smile, flattering Violet, kissing her.

GINO

Hey, Ceasar! You take care of
this girl, or I find out!

JOHNNIE

You are as radiant as ever, Violet.

As he bends to kiss her hand, she sees Ceasar watching
them.

CEASAR

Glenlivett, right Gino?

JOHNNIE

I'll have whatever Violet's
drinking.

VIOLET

I'm not drinking.

JOHNNIE

Then neither will I.

This makes Violet very uncomfortable.

VIOLET

No, I'll have a Tanqueray and tonic.

JOHNNIE

Ceasar, make that two TNTs.

Ceasar's hand shakes as he pours Gino's scotch.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Pacing in her socks, Corky tries to think through several
possible situations. She stops, staring at the bag of
money.

The idea of it sitting out in the open suddenly bothers
her.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Ceasar hands Violet and Johnnie a drink. He stares at
her. She stares back.

JOHNNIE

Salud, eh. Roy, Violet, Pop,
Ceasar.

Ceasar watches Johnnie, suspecting everything he does.

Johnnie reaches into his pocket and takes out a cellular phone.

GINO

No, Johnnie. No goddamned phones.
Not now.

JOHNNIE

Pop?

GINO

Ceasar, come here. Sit. We talk
now. You too, Johnnie.

Each man sits on either side of Gino.

GINO

Ceasar, look at me. Johnnie tell
me what happened. Ceasar, you
gotta do me a favor, a personal
favor. For me, eh? You gotta
start respecting Johnnie the way
you respect me. You understand?
Good.

Ceasar sees Johnnie smiling at him, but when Gino turns,
the smile disappears.

GINO

And you, Johnnie. You gonna stop
acting stupid. You gotta earn
this respect that Ceasar's gonna
give. You understand? Good.
Done. Now, where's our money?

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky drops a hefty bag, knotted tight, into an open five-
gallon bucket of paint.

Pushing it under with a paint stick, the bag disappears,
enveloped by the milk-white liquid.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Ceasar puts the briefcase onto the coffee table.

Gino looks up at Ceasar, very serious, with his hand on
the case.

GINO

We know how this was done, eh?

CEASAR

Yeah, I know.

He looks dead at Johnnie.

GINO

It won't happen again, eh?

Cesar shakes his head.

GINO

Good.

Gino throws down the last of the scotch.

GINO

Done. We go now.

JOHNNIE

Jesus Christ, Pop. You got two hours until your plane leaves.

Gino checks his watch, shouting in Italian. Johnnie shouts back until Gino throws up his hands refusing to listen.

GINO

Cesar!

He gestures to his empty glass, then folds his arms leaning back. Cesar gets the bottle.

JOHNNIE

So Cesar, what did it total out at?

CEASAR

Two point, one seventy-six.

Johnnie whistles as Cesar pours Gino another scotch.

JOHNNIE

Unbelievable. Can you believe that, Violet?

GINO

Hey, Johnnie...

In Italian tells him to shut up.

JOHNNIE

Come on Pop, all I want to know is one thing. Just one thing after he made such a big deal out of it.

(MORE)

JOHNNIE (CONT'D)

I bet it wasn't a big deal. Was it Ceasar?

CEASAR

What's that Johnnie?

JOHNNIE

The money. I bet it was nothing to get it clean, after you made such a fucking big deal...

GINO

Johnnie, what did I say?

JOHNNIE

Pop, this is important to me. It's a simple question. If he would just answer the question, that's the end of it.

CEASAR

Where is this going Johnnie?

JOHNNIE

Just admit it Ceasar.

CEASAR

Admit what?

JOHNNIE

That you over-reacted. That you lost it. Not me. It was your mistake.

Ceasar sees it so clearly now.

CEASAR

All right Johnnie, you want to play it this way, I can play it this way. You want to know who made a mistake, why don't you open the case.

VIOLET

Ceasar...

CEASAR

Shut up, Violet! This is between me and Johnnie.

He pushes the case toward him.

CEASAR

You want to do this now, let's do it. Open the case. Open the fucking case.

Johnnie stares at him, feeling that something is very wrong.

CEASAR

That's right, I know. I fucking know.

JOHNNIE

Know what?

CEASAR

Open the case!

JOHNNIE

All right! Where's the key?

CEASAR

You don't need a key.

He tries but it's locked.

JOHNNIE

How the fuck can I open it?

CEASAR

The same way you did before.

JOHNNIE

What are you talking about?

Cesar smiles and tosses the key onto the table.

CEASAR

There you go, Johnnie.

He reaches for the key. Cesar stands up and gives Violet his drink.

CEASAR

Get me another.

He can see the fear on her face as she goes to the bar.

Time drips.

The key turns. One lock pops.

Then the other.

The case opens like a scream and Johnnie sees the blank paper.

JOHNNIE

What the...

Before anybody can move, Ceasar whips around with his gun.

Roy jumps off his stool, his drink crashing to the floor.

CEASAR

Don't! Don't fucking move!

Nobody can believe what is happening.

GINO

Ceasar? What is this?

CEASAR

Ask Johnnie! Ask your rat-fuck son!

JOHNNIE

What the fuck?

Ceasar levels the gun.

CEASAR

You don't think I'll do it, do you?

JOHNNIE

I think you're fucking crazy!

CEASAR

Where is it?

JOHNNIE

Where's what?

CEASAR

The money!

JOHNNIE

Ceasar, I don't know what you're thinking here, but if you don't put down that gun --

He stands up.

CEASAR

Sit down!

He does.

GINO

Ceasar!

CEASAR

Gino, your son stole this money to
set me up and I can prove it.
Violet!

She doesn't know what to say.

CEASAR

Tell them! Tell them!

VIOLET

For Christ's sake, Johnnie, do
what he says.

JOHNNIE

This isn't happening...

Boom! Ceasar blows a hole in the couch right between
Johnnie's legs. Johnnie screams.

CEASAR

The next one blows off your dick.

JOHNNIE

You're a dead man! A fucking dead
man!

CEASAR

Where is it?

GINO

Enough!

Gino jumps up.

CEASAR

No Gino!

GINO

You aim a gun at me?! Do you know
who I am?! I am Gino Marconi.
You understand?

He starts walking toward Ceasar. Roy moves around for a
good angle.

CEASAR

Sit down Gino!

GINO

No, Ceasar, gimme the gun.

CEASAR

Stay away!

He backs up as Gino walks straight to him.

GINO

We're family, Ceasar.

CEASAR

No!

GINO

Gimme the gun.

CEASAR

I can't. I can't.

GINO

Give it to me.

He reaches up and takes hold of the barrel. Ceasar looks resigned as he shuts his eyes.

GINO

Good man.

Close on Gino's hand holding the gun barrel as --

Ceasar fires.

From behind the gun we watch Gino's grip yanked free, time melting away as he falls, blood bubbling from his chest, his eyes wide in disbelief.

His body hits the floor and the room erupts.

Roy dives, drawing his gun as Ceasar continues to fire, pumping the trigger.

Violet drops behind the bar as Johnnie screams, falling toward his father.

Blood spurts from Roy as two bullets hit, gun clattering and sliding across the floor.

Johnnie lunges at Ceasar as Ceasar turns and fires, hitting Johnnie everywhere; blood and meat spray and speckle everything around him.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

The gun continues to fire as Corky clutches the phone whispering.

CORKY

This is an emergency!

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Crunched down behind the bar, Violet listens to the only sound, repeating in the unnatural quiet:

Click. Click. Click.

Rising, she peers over the edge of the bar.

Cesar is standing in the aftermath. His gun is still aimed at Johnnie as he pulls the trigger over and over.

The bodies are still, blood silently pooling around them.

Blinking the sweat from his eyes, Cesar sees Violet.

CEASAR

I had to do it, Violet. You saw it. I had no choice. It was Johnnie. That lying fuck. He made me do it.

He looks down at Johnnie, hate rising like bile.

CEASAR

You lying rat-fuck. You think you can set me up? Is that what you think? You stupid fuck.

Kicking the body, he causes a series of sickening wet noises.

CEASAR

I'm a dead man? I'm a dead man? Guess again, fuckface. Who's dead? Who's the dead lying rat-fuck? Take another guess, take another fucking guess!

He stops, panting, unable to catch his breath. Violet is afraid to even look at him.

Blood creeps along the edge of the floorboards.

Cesar tries to clear his head, mopping the sweat from his face.

He bends down and starts searching Johnnie's pockets.

He finds his keys.

VIOLET

What are you doing?

Lost in thought, he goes to Gino. Throwing open the coat, he sees the airplane ticket.

He checks the times and then his watch.

CEASAR

... maybe three hours.

VIOLET

Cesar, what are you going to do?

CEASAR

What do you think we're going to do? We have to find the money.

VIOLET

What?

CEASAR

Once we have the money then none of this ever happened.

VIOLET

Cesar you just killed Gino Marconi.

CEASAR

No I didn't. Not if his body disappears and not if the money is still here. Then they never showed up.

VIOLET

What happened to them?

CEASAR

I don't know. We may never know, but I'm going to guess it was a job, maybe the Karpola family.

He smiles.

CEASAR

All part of the business.

He picks up Roy's gun and stuffs it in his belt.

CEASAR

We just got to find the money.
Once we do everything is going to
be all right.

In the distance the wail of a police siren can be heard.

Through the window they see a squad car, lights blaring,
roll up in front of the building.

VIOLET

Oh, no.

He turns back to the carnage.

CEASAR

Fuck.

VIOLET

Ceasar, what are we going to do?

CEASAR

They're just cops. Stall them as
long as you can.

Ceasar flies into action.

Hauling Roy's body up over his shoulder, he hurries to
the bathroom and drops the body into the tub.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Standing near the bathroom, Corky hears the metal echo of
the tub. Looking at her tub she imagines what he is doing.

Through the wall, she hears the door buzzer.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

The buzzer sounds again as Violet sees him lift Gino's
body.

CEASAR

Answer it!

He rushes back to the bathroom, dropping Gino onto the
other two.

The three bloody bodies fill the tub.

We see Johnnie's arm hanging over the edge as Ceasar snaps
the shower curtain around, hiding them.

VIOLET

Hello?

COP #1 (V.O.)

This is the police, ma'am.

She cuts them off using the intercom.

VIOLET

The police?

Over her shoulder she sees Ceasar shoving the furniture, clearing the area around the heavy blood stains.

COP #1 (V.O.)

We had a report of gunfire, so if you could --

VIOLET

Gunfire? Is this a joke?

Violet sees Ceasar hurry to his office.

COP #1 (V.O.)

No joke, ma'am. Please open the door.

VIOLET

How do I know you are cops?

INT. OFFICE

Ceasar seizes the beautiful oriental rug and yanks it up, overturning furniture, dragging it out, he slams the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Violet looks at Ceasar, who is working with the calm, single-minded focus of a machine.

COP #1 (V.O.)

Ma'am, you have to open the door.

VIOLET

All right.

She buzzes them in, as Ceasar throws the rug like someone making a bed, letting it fall and cover most of the blood.

INT. HALL

The cops are waiting for the elevator. After a moment, the door slides open.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Violet moves away from the intercom as Ceasar begins arranging the furniture on the rug.

CEASAR

Get me a wet towel.

His words push her to the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Stuffing a towel into the sink, she turns on the water.

She does not even look at the shower curtain.

INT. HALL

The elevator opens and the cops step out.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Ceasar grabs the television remote, hits "on" and jacks the volume until it is obviously loud.

Violet returns and he snatches the towel from her.

INT. HALL

As the two cops walk down the hall, they hear the television. They look at each other already knowing what happened.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Like a maniac, Ceasar wipes at any blood still visible until there is a knock on the door. He grabs Violet by the arm.

CEASAR

If you're thinking about doing something stupid, remember I just killed Gino Marconi. You understand what that means?

She nods.

VIOLET

They're just cops.

There is another knock, much louder.

Violet goes to the door as Ceasar rips off his blood soaked jacket and shirt.

He drops down behind the bar.

Leaving the chain on, Violet opens the door. The cops smile.

COP #1

See? We're for real.

VIOLET

I'm sorry, it's just you hear stories.

COP #1

You did the right thing.

Crouching, Ceasar wipes vigorously at the blood on his hands and face.

Violet opens the door.

Ceasar crams the bloody wad under the bar sink.

Just as the cops enter the living room, Ceasar stands, looking comfortable in no shirt, with ice cubes in his hands.

CEASAR

Hey, hey, Chicago's finest.

He plunks the ice into a glass and walks from behind the bar

CEASAR

How's it going tonight fellas?

COP #2

Pretty good sir.

Ceasar turns his head.

CEASAR

Huh? I'm sorry, I can only hear in this ear.

The cops look at each other again.

Wiping his wet hand on his pants, Ceasar shakes hands with each of them.

CEASAR

I'm Ceasar and this here is my Violet.

They smile at Violet as Ceasar puts his arm around her.

CEASAR

Violet said something about
gunshots?

Violet sees the gun wedged in the back of his belt.

COP #1

Yes sir, a neighbor in the building
called in.

COP #2

I think we know what happened.

COP #1

It was probably just the television.

CEASAR

The television?

He looks at Violet.

CEASAR

Honey, why didn't you say something?
Turn it off.

Violet walks across the rug and turns off the TV.

CEASAR

Fuck, this happened before. It's
this shitty ear. Born with it.
The batteries wore out in my aid.
I'm sorry.

COP #2

It's all right sir.

COP #1

No big deal.

CEASAR

Hey, can I get you guys a beer?

COP #1

Not on duty, sorry.

CEASAR

Oh right.

COP #2

But, uh, would you mind if I used
your bathroom?

Cesar's face tightens.

CEASAR

Yeah, why not? It's right there.

COP #2

Thanks.

He heads for the john.

Violet watches Ceasar back up to the bar moving behind it.

CEASAR

I'm going to make myself a drink,
if that's okay?

COP #1

Go right ahead, sir.

INT. BATHROOM

Cop #2 enters, walking right past the shower curtain. We hear his sigh as he starts to piss.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Cop #1 walks onto the rug, looking around, turning to Violet.

COP #1

This is a beautiful place.

VIOLET

... thank you.

She stares at his shoes on the rug.

Watching everything, Ceasar takes a sip of his drink. He slips his gun out and holds it at his side.

INT. BATHROOM

There is a bulge in the shower curtain where we imagine Johnnie's arm is hanging.

Slowly we slide down to the bottom edge of the plastic curtain, where a drip of blood forms and --

Plips into a small red spot on the white tile floor.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Close on the heel of the cop's black shoe, where we can almost see the blood seeping up through the oriental rug.

COP #1

Is this a condo?

Violet nods.

Everyone turns when Cop #2 busts out of the bathroom.

COP #2

Okay, let's roll.

Cop #1 walks across the rug to the hardwood floor. He turns to Ceasar.

COP #1

Try to keep the extra batteries for your aid around.

CEASAR

Good idea.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky hears the cop say goodbye to Violet. The door closes. She isn't sure what she should do.

Over her shoulder, she notes the bucket of paint. She lets the cops leave.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Ceasar puts on a new shirt, the gun stuffed in his pants.

CEASAR

Let's go.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

They step out of the apartment, Ceasar jerking the door shut.

As they pass by, Violet looks up to the door of the empty apartment, straight at the peephole.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky is pressed against the door, eye at the peephole.

She sees that Violet is afraid as the two women seem to speak to each other with their eyes.

CORKY

... shit.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Ceasar is on his knees searching under the seats of Johnnie's Mercedes. Unable to find the money, Ceasar is ready to snap.

From the main doors, Corky slips out of the building.

Hiding behind a column, she sees them across the lot.

Corky moves behind the parked cars, the gun squeezed in her hand.

Violet edges away, on the verge of running, looking toward the busy street.

Standing, Ceasar pounds on the car.

CEASAR

Fuck! Fuck! Fuck!

VIOLET

Ceasar, some one could see us out here.

Ignoring her, he tries to think.

CEASAR

Get in.

Still too far from them to do anything, Corky sees Ceasar slam the trunk.

CEASAR

Get in! It's got to be at his house. That's the only other place it could be.

Violet looks around the lot, looking for some way out.

CEASAR

Violet! Now!

Corky can only watch as Violet gets in and the car rips away.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Alone, Corky stands over the bucket of paint. She kicks it with her boot-toe.

CORKY

Two million dollars, Cork... Two million dollars...

She sighs, wondering how long she can make herself wait.

EXT. JOHNNIE'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

The Mercedes is parked in front.

INT. JOHNNIE'S BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Close on Ceasar, as he rakes his sweaty hair back, his face knotted in torment.

CEASAR

Okay, I come in...

He turns as if he just came in through the front door.

We see Johnnie's home has been laid to waste. The furniture is broken, cushions split open, pictures shattered, holes punched in the drywall, even the carpeting has been torn up.

Ceasar doesn't look much better.

CEASAR

I've got the money...

Huddled in a corner, Violet watches him.

CEASAR

I can't wait to see the look on
Ceasar's face when he finds out.

Ceasar moves from the front door, trying to get into Johnnie's head.

CEASAR

Now I don't have much time...

He takes a couple of steps into the room.

CEASAR

Got to put it someplace safe...

He looks at a closet. It's gutted, searched 10 times already.

CEASAR

... put it...

A couple more uneasy steps and he looks at a large overturned rolltop desk.

CEASAR

... got it...

He starts looking around the room as if he is seeing for the first time that it is destroyed. He is near the breaking point.

VIOLET

C?

His voice cracks. There is nowhere else to look.

CEASAR

Where did I put it?

He explodes. A terra cotta lamp sails across the room.

CEASAR

Where's my fucking money?! Fucking cocksuckers! Where the fuck is it?!

He smashes his forehead into the wall, denting the drywall.

CEASAR

Ow.

He holds his head sinking to the ground.

VIOLET

C?

She sits next to him, putting a hand lightly on his shoulder.

VIOLET

It's not here, Ceasar.

CEASAR

Where, then?

VIOLET

I don't know. it could be anywhere. We don't even know if he was alone. Please, Ceasar, we don't have much time. Let's get out of here.

He knows what he has to do. Digging through the debris, he finds the phone.

VIOLET

What are you doing?

CEASAR

We're going to need some time.

VIOLET

Who are you going to call?

Already dialing, he does not answer

VIOLET

Ceasar?

Ceasar takes a deep breath, mustering composure.

MICKEY (V.O.)

Yeah?

CEASAR

Hey Mickey.

VIOLET

Oh god.

MICKEY (V.O.)

Ceasar? What the fuck time is it?

CEASAR

Mick, I know it's late, but there is a problem. They haven't shown up yet.

MICKEY (V.O.)

What? They ain't there?

CEASAR

No. I don't know where they are. I even called over at Johnnie's but no answer.

MICKEY (V.O.)

Okay. Let me call around. I'll see what I can do. Don't go anywhere, okay?

CEASAR

Okay, sure, Mick.

MICKEY (V.O.)

Ceasar, you still got the money?

Ceasar looks at Violet.

CEASAR

Yeah, Mick. I've got the money. I'm staring right at it.

MICKEY (V.O.)

Good. Sit tight. I'll call you.

He hangs up.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

Ceasar drags himself in. Violet closes the door behind them.

Ceasar moves into the room where it happened. He is dizzy and confused and does not want to be here.

Violet turns him around.

VIOLET

I'll start packing. You know what you have to do.

She turns him toward the bathroom. He nods.

CEASAR

I can use Johnnie's car, dump it in Lake Michigan... I need plastic bags... tape and rope...

VIOLET

Just hurry.

Nodding, he heads for the kitchen.

INT. BEDROOM

Violet enters and goes straight for the phone. She looks at the blank wall as she dials.

VIOLET

Please, Corky...

The phone rings.

When Corky answers, Violet almost collapses with relief.

VIOLET

Oh thank god.

CORKY

I'm still here.

VIOLET

I was so afraid you...

CORKY

You don't quit on me, Violet, and I won't quit on you.

INT. KITCHEN

A box of Hefty bags tucked under his arm, a coil of clothesline in his hand, Ceasar searches through several cabinets.

INT. BEDROOM

Violet glances at the door.

VIOLET

Corky, it worked! He's going to run. He needs to take care of the bodies to buy himself time, but as soon as he leaves, it's over.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky falls against the wall.

VIOLET (V.O.)

just a little longer and it's ours.

She looks at the bucket.

INT. KITCHEN

Mumbling to himself, Ceasar walks out of the kitchen, heading for the bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM

Violet reaches out and touches the wall, as if she were touching Corky.

VIOLET

Corky, I have to tell you something...

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky turns to the wall.

CORKY

I know, Violet. I know.

Her fingers gently touch the wall as we travel up and over where we see they are actually touching the wall in the exact same place.

CORKY

It's why I'm still here.

INT. BEDROOM

Suddenly, Violet hears Ceasar.

CEASAR (V.O.)

Violet?

As he opens the door, she slams down the phone.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

The line cuts off.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Fear and panic paralyze Violet as Ceasar drops everything grabbing for his gun.

CEASAR

Who was that?

He levels the gun at her.

CEASAR

Who the fuck was that?

She stands and he rushes at her, grabbing her by the throat.

CEASAR

Was that Mickey? Did you call
Mickey? Did you?!

She shakes her head and he throws her on the bed. The gun aimed at her, he picks up the phone and --

Hits the re-dial.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Unsure of what happened, Corky hears the phone ring and answers it on reflex.

Listening, she waits.

INT. BEDROOM

Ceasar listens, waiting as long as he can.

CEASAR

Mickey? Is that you?

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky hangs up, jumping away from the wall.

INT. BEDROOM

Ceasar hits the re-dial again.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Panicking, Corky doesn't answer it but as it rings very loud in the empty apartment, she realizes her mistake.

INT. BEDROOM

Turning slowly toward the wall, Ceasar hears the phone ringing in the empty apartment.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky rips the plug out of the wall.

INT. BEDROOM

The line goes dead.

CEASAR

Who is that? Who is over there?!
Tell me!

She tries to get away but he grabs her and slaps her to the ground.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Corky hears Violet scream and that does it. Gun in hand, she flies at the door.

INT. BEDROOM

The door to the empty apartment slams shut and Ceasar hearing it starts to run --

But Violet reaches out, catching his ankle, sending him crashing to the dresser.

VIOLET

Run! Just run!

INT. HALL

The door to Ceasar's apartment is locked. Corky falls to one knee, whipping two lock picks from her ear-lobe.

INT. BEDROOM

Ceasar raises the gun to pistol-whip Violet and she screams.

INT. HALL

Working the lock, Corky hears Violet's scream cut off.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Ceasar rushes towards the front door.

INT. HALL

Corky feels it click and rotates the cylinder.

INT. LIVING ROOM

He is almost there when he hears the lock snap open. He stops.

INT. HALL

Hearing something that sounds like footsteps, she stops.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Stepping quietly, he leans forward to the peep-hole. The hall is empty.

Slowly we glide over the top of the door into --

INT. HALL

Where we see Corky down low, pressed flat to the door, just under the scope of the wide angle lens.

Separated by only a two inch thick door, they can almost feel each other's body heat.

INT. APARTMENT

Ceasar reaches for the knob, his fingers touching the metal sphere when --

It begins to turn.

He pulls his hand back and seems to disappear.

The door cracks open and Corky slips in, gun first. As she moves into the room we see Ceasar behind her.

He puts his gun to her head.

CEASAR

Drop the fucking gun or die!

Corky hesitates.

CEASAR

Drop it!

She does.

CEASAR

Turn around.

Rising from her crouch, she turns and he recognizes her.

CEASAR

You!? Holy fucking Christ! You
gotta be kidding me?

He starts to laugh when she strikes --

Knocking the gun, she punches him, slamming him back
against the door as --

She twists, diving, grabbing her gun, just as --

He steps and kicks her full in the face.

INT. CLOSET

Still unconscious, Corky's head jerks reacting to the
kick.

We see the dried blood caked to her cheek where his kick
split the skin. She is again swimming toward
consciousness.

We hear water splash, her face flinching as we move closer;
the sounds and voices echoing.

CEASAR (V.O.)

Wake up! Come on you fucking dyke!

We hear Ceasar slapping her.

CEASAR (V.O.)

Wake up!

INT. BEDROOM

Corky's face is dripping with water as her eyes slowly
blink open.

Coming into focus is Ceasar, standing over her with an empty glass in one hand.

CEASAR

Good.

Except for the gag, she is bound as we have seen her bound in the closet.

Ceasar yanks out his gun and puts it to her head.

CEASAR

I know everything now so I don't want to hear any "I don't know" bullshit, you understand?

She sees Violet on the bed, also bound hand and foot.

CEASAR

God, I should have seen this coming! The second I met you I knew it. Everyone knows your kind can't be trusted! Fucking queers make me sick.

The gun digs into her cheek.

CEASAR

But you tried to fuck the wrong guy. And I swear to you that I'm going to kill you for it.

He thumbs back the hammer.

CEASAR

Where is the money?

VIOLET

Don't tell him --

CEASAR

Shut up Violet!

VIOLET

He can't kill you --

He aims the gun at Violet.

CEASAR

Violet!

VIOLET

Not until he has the money!

He fires and she jumps as the bullet punches through the wall behind her.

His point made, he puts the gun back to Corky's head.

CEASAR

Now, where the fuck is my money?

CORKY

Lick me.

CEASAR

Where is it?

CORKY

Either pull the trigger or get that thing out of my face.

Blood temperature rising again, Ceasar pulls the gun back and slaps her with it.

CEASAR

Stupid cunt!

VIOLET

Ceasar, stop acting like an asshole and think --

CEASAR

Don't try to tell me what to do.

VIOLET

You need the money just like we do.

CEASAR

Shut up, Violet.

VIOLET

Let us go and we'll make a deal.

He rushes at her, grabbing a fistful of her hair.

CEASAR

Shut the fuck up!

He looks at Corky.

CEASAR

What did you do to her?! This isn't my Violet!

He looks at her as if unable to recognize her

CEASAR

What did she do to you?

VIOLET

Everything you couldn't.

He shoves her down.

CEASAR

You ungrateful bitch! You had nothing before I met you. You were nothing!

He stomps around the room.

CEASAR

Who gave you this place? This apartment?

He throws open the closet.

CEASAR

Who gave us all of this? I did! I gave you everything! I gave you this life! I made you, Violet. I saved you.

He seems to believe what he is saying.

CEASAR

I saved you.

VIOLET

Ha! What a load of crap. Look at yourself, Ceasar. You're a thug. You launder money for the mob. You rent women like you rented this apartment.

He doesn't want to hear this.

VIOLET

Saved me? You don't even know me. You used me Ceasar, just like I used you. All part of the business.

CEASAR

You betrayed me!

VIOLET

You murdered Gino!

CEASAR

I had to. You made me.

VIOLET

Bullshit, you killed him. Not me.
You did it because you couldn't
stand the thought of Johnnie fucking
you.

CEASAR

Shut up!

He slaps her.

CEASAR

Okay, you want business, I'll give
you the fucking business.

He leans closer.

CEASAR

I'm going to make you beg just
like Shelly did. Just like Shelly!

He storms out of the room.

Corky looks up at Violet.

VIOLET

I'm sorry, Corky...

CORKY

Don't be sorry. Help me.

She pulls at the ropes as Violet slides off the bed.

INT. KITCHEN

Cesar throws open the broom closet and grabs the clippers
that Mickey used to cut off Shelly's finger.

INT. BEDROOM

The two women are back to back, fingers working at each
other's knots when Cesar bursts into the room.

CEASAR

Oh, no no no.

Grabbing Corky by the boots, he drags her and flips her
so that she can now see Violet.

He drops down onto Violet putting the clippers in front
of her face.

CEASAR

Hey, Violet, you remember these?

Her eyes widen with terror. She starts to scream when he stuffs a towel in her mouth.

Laying against Violet, he turns to Corky.

CEASAR

I'm going to start with her so
you'll get a good idea what's
coming.

He takes hold of Violet's pinky finger stretching it out.

CEASAR

I'm going to ask you where the
money is. Every time you don't
give me an answer, I'm going to
cut off one finger.

CORKY

No.

CEASAR

When I reach ten, then I'll start
with you.

He puts the finger between the blades.

CEASAR

Where is the money?

Corky sees Violet thrashing helplessly. She has no choice.
Her mouth opens as --

The door buzzer rings.

Cesar is distracted, trying to think who it could be.

CEASAR

... Mickey.

He sees the phone, where he dropped it, lying off the
hook.

The door buzzer rings again, more incessant. Corky sees
him momentarily unnerved.

He looks back at her.

CEASAR

I said where --

He starts to cut and Corky screams --

CORKY

No! I'll tell you!

He stops, the door buzzing continuously.

CORKY

It's over there in the empty apartment.

As she speaks the sound of the door buzzer changes.

CORKY

I put it inside one of the paint drums.

He is not looking at her, listening, he realizes that Mickey is buzzing the other apartments.

Cesar stands as the buzzing stops. He pulls out his gun and aims it at Corky.

CEASAR

I promised I would kill you.

He cocks it.

CORKY

You can't kill me yet.

CEASAR

Why?

CORKY

I could be lying.

His hand starts to shake with frustration. He is beginning to hate this woman more than he ever hated Johnnie.

Taking a deep breath, he eases back the hammer.

CEASAR

You're going to wish to god you hadn't done that.

He kicks her again, snapping her head back.

After he leaves, Violet looks over and sees Corky lying unconscious.

INT. HALL

Cesar tries to open the door to the empty apartment but it is locked.

CEASAR

Fuck.

At the end of the hall, the elevator "dings". Just as the door opens, Ceasar jumps back into his apartment.

CEASAR

Son of a bitch...

His mind a racing blur, he locks the door and runs back to the bedroom.

With another towel he gags Corky and drags her into the closet. In her pocket, he finds the key.

He closes the doors then hangs up the phone.

Grunting he hauls Violet up over his shoulder --

When there is a knock on the door.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Carrying Violet he hurries to the kitchen, where he throws Corky's gun into the freezer.

Mickey is banging on the door as Ceasar heads for the bathroom.

INT. BATHROOM

Dropping Violet, he reaches behind the curtain and turns on the shower.

CEASAR

Mickey will get in. I know he will.

We hear the water hitting the bodies while Ceasar starts tearing off his clothes.

CEASAR

Violet. I can kill you right now if that's what you want. If you want to live then you have to help me. I need you to make Mickey believe that everything is normal.

He picks up his gun.

CEASAR

Tell me, do you want to live?

She stares hard at him and his gun, then nods.

CEASAR

Good girl.

INT. LIVING ROOM

We move toward the door as the lock clicks open.

INT. BATHROOM

Violet's hands are untied. She pulls off the gag and the ropes at her feet.

Naked, Ceasar sticks his head under the shower spray, wetting everything.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Still dripping, Ceasar walks out, a towel wrapped around his waist, another towel in his hand.

Mickey and Lou are standing in the middle of the room. Ceasar jumps.

CEASAR

Jesus Christ!

Ceasar holds his chest, laying it on a bit thick.

CEASAR

Holy fuck Mickey! You scared the shit outta me.

He sees they both are holding their guns.

CEASAR

What is this? what are you two doing, sneaking in here with your peckers in your hands? You gonna do me, Mick? Is that it?

Mickey smiles, putting his gun away.

MICKEY

No, Cease. There was no answer.

CEASAR

I thought I heard someone knocking.

MICKEY

I was buzzing, I was knocking, but I guess you couldn't hear me on account of being in the shower.

CEASAR

Yeah, it was Violet's idea. I was so wound up about Gino, she was trying to help me relax.

MICKEY

That Violet is one nice lady. Wish someone would help me relax.

CEASAR

Shit, Mick, come on in, let me get you a drink. Sit down, Lou.

Behind the bar, he sets down the towel he was holding and we see the gun hidden inside it.

INT. BATHROOM

Violet watches through a sliver of open door, her mind already working.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Cesar is making the drinks.

MICKEY

We was worried about you, Cease.

CEASAR

Me? Why?

MICKEY

We went over to Johnnie's place, just to check it out and it was busted up, Bad.

Cesar hands him a drink.

MICKEY

I started thinking maybe it's about the money so I call you but all I get is the busy signal. I figure the phone is off the hook, that's why I come rushing over here.

CEASAR

Oh Christ, the phone... That was a fucking stupid thing to do, wasn't it?

MICKEY

Hey, if Violet was helping me relax, I'd probably do the same thing.

Mickey smiles as he sips his drink.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Violet stands and goes to the shower curtain. She reaches in and turns off the water.

Steadying herself, she pulls back the curtain, exposing the wet, bloody bodies.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mickey is looking at the furniture.

MICKEY

Cease, can I ask you something?

CEASAR

Yeah.

MICKEY

Why'd you move all the furniture around?

The knot in Ceasar's stomach tightens.

MICKEY

Let me guess. That was Violet's idea too.

He laughs, and Lou laughs with him.

CEASAR

Actually, yeah, she was nervous about Gino coming, wanted everything to look right. You know women Mick.

MICKEY

Sure Cease. They make us do stupid things, don't they.

Cesar smiles feebly.

INT. BATHROOM

Violet has pulled up Johnnie's body and is digging through his coat pockets, searching for something.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Mickey sees the briefcase still on the coffee table.

MICKEY

Is that the money?

CEASAR

Yeah, that's it.

Cesar puts his hand inside the towel as Mickey walks across the rug.

MICKEY

That fucking Shelly. I gotta hand it to the guy but Jesus if I were him I would have bailed a long time ago. I mean, how much money does a man need?

Talking to Lou, he picks up the case and walks back, somehow moving right between the wet spots.

MICKEY

I remember I was just staring at all this goddamn money, Shelly down on his knees, and the next thing I know, Johnnie just blows his head off.

He slaps the case up onto the bar.

MICKEY

What a fucking mess. Johnnie's laughing his ass off and that's when Cesar lost it and -- Boom. He cold-cocked him. Fucking cold-cocks Johnnie Marconi.

He thumbs the latches but the case is still locked.

MICKEY

Hey, Cesar, where's the key?

CEASAR

The key, yeah, the key's in my pants in the bathroom.

MICKEY

Fuck it, I don't need the key.

Cesar takes the smallest breath.

MICKEY

I didn't need a key to get in here, did I?

He pulls out a lock-pick and starts working the lock. The muscles in Ceasar's forearm bulge as he tightly squeezes his gun.

He is slipping toward that same desperate choice. He is going to attack when --

Across the room, the phone rings.

Everyone looks at it.

MICKEY

Who the hell could that be?

The phone is near the couch. Ceasar doesn't want to let go of the gun.

The phone continues to ring.

MICKEY

You gonna answer it?

INT. BATHROOM

Violet has Johnnie's cellular phone.

Watching through the cracked door, Violet sees Ceasar cross to answer the phone.

CEASAR (V.O.)

Hello?

VIOLET

Hello, Ceasar. This is Gino.

Ceasar looks toward the bathroom.

CEASAR (V.O.)

What?

VIOLET

You're blowing your only chance.
Act like I'm Gino.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Ceasar's eyes light up.

CEASAR

Holy shit, I don't believe it!
We've been going crazy over here,
Gino!

VIOLET (V.O.)

Good boy.

Mickey jumps up.

CEASAR

It's Gino! It's Gino!

MICKEY

Where in the hell is he?

INT. BATHROOM

VIOLET

We were in a car accident --

CEASAR (V.O.)

They were in a car accident.

VIOLET

But everybody is all right.

INT. LIVING ROOM

CEASAR

They're all fine. Just bruises
and shit.

VIOLET (V.O.)

Now you listen to me, asshole, I
know your gun is behind the bar...

MICKEY

Un-fucking-believable. I called
those highway patrol dumb fucks.

CEASAR

Ssh! I can't hear Gino!

VIOLET (V.O.)

We make a deal or I come out and
hand this phone to Mickey.

CEASAR

I'm listening.

INT. BATHROOM

Violet has her robe over her dress, wrapping her hair in
a towel, making sure the bruise on her forehead is hidden.

VIOLET

I want what's mine, half the money.
(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

We get rid of Mickey, no one else dies. No one. Say yes, I understand.

CEASAR (V.O.)

Yes, I understand.

VIOLET

Tell them I'm at St. Mary's off the Kennedy, in the waiting room, but stay on the phone until I come out.

CEASAR (V.O.)

Sure Gino, sure.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Out of the corner of his eye, he watches Violet come out of the bathroom.

CEASAR

St. Mary's off the Kennedy, sure. Okay, Gino.

Mickey sees Violet.

VIOLET

Mickey? What are you doing here?

MICKEY

Violet, it's Gino and Johnnie. They were in a car accident.

VIOLET

Oh my god. Was anyone hurt?

MICKEY

I think everything is okay.

Cesar hangs up.

CEASAR

They're at St. Mary's in the waiting room.

Mick is already on the way.

MICKEY

I can't fit them all in my car so give me your keys. You drive my car, Lou.

Cesar sees Violet walking toward the kitchen.

CEASAR

Sure, Mickey, sure. Violet!

She stops, looking straight at the freezer.

CEASAR

Go grab my car keys from my pants
in the bathroom.

She turns to him.

CEASAR

Please, help us out, Mickey wants
to get going.

She turns to the bathroom.

MICKEY

They might want to go straight to
the airport and back to Miami, so
I better take this.

He grabs the briefcase.

MICKEY

You got the key?

CEASAR

Oh yeah. Violet!

INT. CLOSET

Where Corky remains bound, still unconscious. We hear
the name echo in her head.

CEASAR (V.O.)

Violet!

Suddenly, her eyes blink open.

CEASAR (V.O.)

Violet!

Her eyes blink again as she tries to focus.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Violet hands Mickey the keys for the car and the case.

MICKEY

Thanks, V.

He kisses her on the cheek.

CEASAR

Call me as soon as you get him.

MICKEY

Leave your phone on the hook.

Mickey and Lou leave. Violet is staring at Ceasar standing near the door.

In his right hand he is holding the other towel. He smiles.

CEASAR

Now that's team work.

VIOLET

I should have let him kill you.

CEASAR

You know he would have done you too.

VIOLET

I knew I couldn't trust you.

He drops the towel, raising the gun.

CEASAR

I said I'd let you live and I will.

He smiles again.

CEASAR

Maybe.

INT. CLOSET

Corky is wide awake, thrashing-mad, biting her gag, struggling to get free.

INT. LIVING ROOM

Ceasar pulls his pants on.

CEASAR

Time to find out if the dyke was stupid enough to lie.

Ceasar drags Violet through the front door.

INT. BEDROOM

The closet doors burst open, as Corky fights her way out.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Cesar sees the buckets of paint.

He rips the lid from the nearest and kicks it over. Paint spills out across the floor.

INT. BEDROOM

Suddenly Corky stops, something has caught her eye. We drop down focusing on what she is staring at --

The clippers.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

He kicks over the second bucket and the bag tumbles out with the rushing flow of paint.

CEASAR

Yes!

He turns to Violet who is already running out the door.

CEASAR

No!

INT. HALL

Violet turns down the hall, bare feet beating against the floor.

Cesar slices out of the room behind her.

CEASAR

Violet!

He aims the gun as she hurls her self into the emergency door.

CEASAR

Fuck!

INT. STAIRWELL

She flies, hands on the rail spiraling down each flight as he charges after her.

CEASAR

Goddamnit Violet! Stop! Now!

INT. BEDROOM

Straining, Corky's fingers curl around the handle of the clippers.

INT. LOBBY

Violet smashes through the door but instead of turning to the main doors she runs straight for the elevators.

She pounds the button and waits.

VIOLET

Come on. Come on, please.

She hears Ceasar coming just as the elevator opens.

Ceasar crashes out of the stair door, running toward the exit. When he doesn't see her, he turns to the sound of the elevator --

And catches a glimpse of her as the doors close.

CEASAR

Oh, you bitch. You fucking bitch.

Taking a really deep breath, he throws open the door to the stairs.

INT. ELEVATOR

Violet takes Johnnie's cellular phone from the robe pocket and dials a number.

Mickey answers on the car phone.

VIOLET

Mickey! Oh god Mickey!

MICKEY (V.O.)

Violet?

Whispering, she acts terrified.

VIOLET

He made me help him, Mickey, god I was so afraid. It was Ceasar, all Ceasar. You have to help me. He's coming -- Oh god!

She hangs up, eyes blazing.

INT. STAIRWELL

Sweat pouring off him, Ceasar climbs the stairs.

INT. HALL

The elevator opens, Violet bolts out. She runs down the hall, past the empty apartment, back to her door.

VIOLET

Corky?

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

She rushes to the bedroom where she finds the coils of cut rope.

VIOLET

Corky!

She looks at the wall separating the apartment.

INT. HALL

Ceasar half falls out of the stair door, drenched with sweat.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Gun ready, Ceasar throws open the door.

Spread out like a pond of milk is the spilled paint but --

The money is gone.

Leading away from the white pool are boot prints and the drip trail of the plastic bag.

The tracks lead to the bathroom.

Ceasar kicks open the bathroom door and finds the bag of money next to Corky's empty boots.

Over his shoulder we see Corky already swinging a massive pipe wrench.

At the last second he is able to duck, falling to the ground as --

The door jamb splinters with a terrible metal crunch.

Before he can recover and shoot she brings the wrench down on his arm.

He screams as the gun hits the floor.

She kicks it, sending it skidding, hydroplaning across the paint pool to the other side, leaving a jet trail of white swirls and spirals on the wood floor.

They fight, Corky raining blows onto his back and flailing arm until --

He catches her foot, flipping her as he clambers up.

Scrambling across the paint, slipping, crawling for the gun when --

Violet bursts in pointing the gun from the freezer.

VIOLET

Stop!

Ceasar, on hands and knees, looks at her then at his gun still out of reach.

VIOLET

It's over, Ceasar. I called Mickey.
He's on his way.

Violet stands for long time, the gun trained carefully on him as he rises from the floor.

Panting, Ceasar watches her like a mad dog.

VIOLET

Get out of here, Ceasar. If you
want to live you had better start
running.

He smiles.

CEASAR

All these years and you still don't
know me, Violet.

He casually moves towards the gun.

CEASAR

But I know you.

CORKY

Violet?

CEASAR

You can't kill me, Violet. You're
not the type.

VIOLET

Ceasar, don't.

Corky's eyes widen as Ceasar stands over the gun.

VIOLET

Ceasar!

CEASAR

I hear you, V. Sure we'll split
the money. Whatever you want.

Ceasar lunges.

CORKY

Violet.

He is up and aiming when Violet fires --

The bullet hits Ceasar in the shoulder, knocking him off
balance. He spins around, still trying to find her in
his sites when --

She fires again.

His body arcs back, falling, splashing into the paint.

Ceasar's blood bubbles out bright red against the
glistening white.

Violet and Corky hold each other, both women crying, ready
to collapse.

VIOLET

It's not over, Mickey will be here
any minute.

CORKY

Oh no.

VIOLET

It's all right. I know what to
do. Just hold me a little more.

Corky does.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

The door opens and we glide inside, moving through the
main rooms as though searching them.

We turn to the bedroom and we see Violet laying unconscious
on the floor.

MICKEY

Violet!

Gun in hand, Mickey bends to her side, checking her pulse. He sees the huge welt on her forehead where Ceasar hit her.

Her long lashes beat like butterfly wings as she wakes.

She is suddenly afraid.

VIOLET

Oh no! No!

MICKEY

It's me. It's me, Mickey. You're all right.

Her body heaves with relief as she clutches to him.

VIOLET

Mickey...

MICKEY

Shh! It's okay now. Everything is all right.

INT. EMPTY APARTMENT

Days later. The apartment is totally clean.

INT. CEASAR'S APARTMENT

It is empty and clean. In the bedroom, only a few hangers are left dangling in the open closet.

EXT. PARKING LOT

Mickey is standing with Violet, next to his car.

VIOLET

I will never understand it, Mickey. You didn't even call the police.

MICKEY

I told you, the family doesn't want the police around. We want to take care of it ourselves and we will. I'll find him. I swear I will.

VIOLET

I know you will.

MICKEY

Sure you're going to be okay? I mean, if you're having second thoughts my offer still stands.

VIOLET

Thanks Mickey, but I need to get out, you know? Get away from all of this.

Mickey nods.

VIOLET

But thanks. Thanks for everything.

She hugs him and he kisses her. Then he gets in his car.

Violet watches him drive away and knows that she is free.

INT. PAROLE OFFICE

Corky is still in the parole office.

OFFICER

You haven't heard a goddamn word I've said, have you?

Corky studies her fingernails. They are clean and manicured.

OFFICER

I could hold you for six more months, for six years, and I'd just be wasting the taxpayer's coffee and air conditioning.

She looks up at him as he flips open her file.

OFFICER

This is the part of my job I hate the most.

Bam. He hits the first page with a stamp that reads: RELEASED.

OFFICER

Only satisfaction I get is knowing that I'll never see you again.

CORKY

No sir. You won't.

She stands almost smiling.

EXT. PAROLE BUILDINGS - DAY

Corky exits the revolving door and smiles.

Violet is waiting out front, leaning on a brand new Chevy truck. She is wearing a short hair cut and leather jacket.

She stamps out a cigarette as Corky approaches.

CORKY

Going my way?

VIOLET

Definitely.

CORKY

So, where are we going anyway?

VIOLET

Anywhere we want.

They smile, lean for each other, and lock lips.

FADE OUT.

THE END