

"KISS, KISS, BANG, BANG"

(2005)

You'll Never Die In This Town Again

by

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I stood upon a high place
And I saw, below, many devils
Running, leaping,
And cavorting in sin.
One looked up, grinning,
And said, "Comrade! Brother!"

-- Stephen Crane

The entrance to the Denton Towers was
clogged with police cars and curiosity
seekers.

"Wonder what's wrong there?" Liddell
asked.

The cabby grunted. "Some dame probably
gave herself the deep six. The joint's
full of kepties and every so often they
come out of those windows like leaves in
a rainstorm."

Frank Kane, BARE TRAP, 1952

FADE IN:

ECU of PAPER; you can see the pulp texture.

Pause... Another shape appears, bright RED and huge.
A THUMBNAIL. CAMERA begins, slowly, to pull back...

A PEN POINT. It begins WRITING gracefully:

NO ONE WILL UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M
GOING TO DO TONIGHT. THAT'S OKAY.

Pulling back. Feminine HANDS now, in view.

MY DECISION, HOWEVER, IS A RATIONAL,
COGNATIVE ONE. I CAN NO LONGER

Stops. Finger taps the page thoughtfully. Reaches off --
re-enters with a DICTIONARY. Flips through it.

COG-NI-TIVE, adj.

She scratches out the word COGNATIVE. COGNITIVE in its
place. Sets aside the dictionary. Continues:

I CAN NO LONGER PERSERVERE. IT MAY
COMFORT MY FATHER TO KNOW THAT MY SUICIDE

Grabs the dictionary. Flips through... PERSEVERE, v.

PERSERVERE wrong; PERSEVERE, that's got it...

TO KNOW THAT MY SUICIDE IS DUE
ONLY PARTIALLY TO HIM.

A pause, then, as an afterthought:

YOU THINK I'M STUPID, DADDY BUT I'M NOT

BLACK SCREEN. Pause... then we SUPER:

DAY ONE - TROUBLE IS MY BUSINESS

EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS - NIGHT

The CAMERA roams the canyons west. Starts high in the
night air. DIPS toward the road, free-falling...

Whooooosh...! Falls into line, alongside fast-moving
CARS, all rushing uphill... To an opulent HOUSE.

LIMOS rolling in, as we HEAR:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It's hard to believe it was just last Christmas that me and Harmony changed the world. We didn't mean to; and it didn't last long -- a thing like that can't.

(beat)

Thanks for coming. I guess you'd call this a detective story; there are dull parts, but there's a murder in it. Also a broken heart so I guess it's a love story. Oh, and everything's connected, it all loops back around, it's cool. My name's Harry Lockhart, I'll be your narrator. Welcome to L.A. Welcome to the party.

INT. HOUSE - LAVISH ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Camera descends, huge GALA in progress. Wall to wall money. Two JUNIOR AGENTS go by, deep in debate:

ICM TYPE

Okay, you can own any film; you want STAR WARS? You can have it -- exact movie, everything's 100% the same -- except in the middle, Yoda points and says, "Luke, you dumbfuck! Quit dickin' around and pay attention." Then it goes back to normal. Rest of the movie, exactly the same. Would you invest..?

AN ALMOST HANDSOME MAN enters, dressed a tad shabby, sports the only tie he owns; welcome HARRY, our narrator.

HARRY (V.O.)

That's me: Harry. Now that I'm in L.A., I go to parties -- the kind where if a girl is named Jill she spells it J-Y-L-L-E, that bullshit.

Before he's ten feet in, a tricked-out BLONDE approaches:

BLONDE

Hi. What do you do for a living?

No preamble; just like that. Harry smiles:

HARRY

I invented dice.

BLONDE

Oh.

HARRY

And you..?

The blonde shrugs. Says off-handedly:

BLONDE

I do a little acting.

FLASH: THE BLONDE, NAKED atop Andrew Stevens. She looks up, SHRIEKS--! A CREATURE swipes a CLAW at her. A bad replica of her HEAD blasts through a glass WINDOW.

BACK TO SCENE: The blonde smiles. Pause, then:

BLONDE

I'm gonna see who else is here.

She walks away. He watches her go. Shifts his gaze --

LOCATES TWO MEN in the crowd. One's portly. Sucks on a cigarette, then glares at it like it just made him angry. The other is trim, wide-shouldered.

HARRY (V.O.)

Guy smoking, that's Dabney Shaw, my producer; he "discovered" me. The man walking with him is Perry van Shrike, AKA Gay Perry; honest-to-God private eye, consults in film, TV. Just incorporated, he's big time. Also he's gay.

Producer Shaw and Gay Perry wander near another, OBVIOUS GAY MAN (Perry is not obvious, F.Y.I.) and overhear:

OBVIOUSLY GAY MAN

... I said I wished I was Queen Elizabeth, and he goes, "Oh, baby, you sure you want to be a virgin Queen..?"

SHAW

(shakes his head)

All these gay stories. Christ.

GAY PERRY

Scares you, that sort of talk...?

SHAW

Don't start, Perry. Look, I seen you play ball, I know you're tough, it's just... you see a guy's wally, your brain goes to, "I wanna grab that," for me, see, that's... that's a real leap.

(MORE)

SHAW (cont'd)
 It's like, "Hey, an elephant -- Quick,
 let's use its blood to paint my
 boathouse." Not the first thing you
 think of.

BACK WITH HARRY: He discovers a VAST ROOM -- 300 people.

HARRY (V.O.)
 L.A. -- By now, you may wonder how I
 wound up here... or maybe not, maybe you
 wonder how Silly Putty picks shit up from
 comic books, point is, I don't see
 another Goddamn narrator, so pipe down.
 How'd I get here? See for yourself.

CUT TO BLACK. Pause... then, over black we SUPER:

HARRY

INT. STORE - 2000 MILES AWAY -- EVENING

TOY STORE. The east Village, Manhattan. The interior is
 hushed, dark. Closed for business.

An idea which seems lost on HARRY LOCKHART. He pushes a
 TRAM, heaped with toys he's stealing. Nearby, his pal
 RICHIE BAUER; similarly engaged.

Harry's on a CEL PHONE. Speaking in hushed tones:

HARRY
 Look, I'm going nuts here... Say it again,
 I must be missing something...

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)
 Cyber-Agent: C-Y-B -- look, why don't you
 ask, like, an employee or something?

HARRY
 They're all busy. Hah! Here.

Shines his light on a doll: PROTOCOL - Protector of Man.

HARRY
Protocol, is that it..? Protector of
 Man, he protects men.

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)
 Dad. Look up. Is there a sign..?

Harry shifts the beam upward, sees: BARGAIN BIN.

YOUNG GIRL (O.S.)

That show was cancelled two years ago.
Just ask a -- wait, are they even open?

HARRY

Holiday hours. Look, I gotta go, I'll
find it --

ANOTHER ANGLE - ON JUNCTION BOX

We see the security system has been RE-ROUTED. Alligator
clips, bridging the circuit. Nice work --

Until a BUS GOES BY outside. Wall, vibrating... One of
the clips POPS free.

EXT. TOY STORE - NIGHT

A BURGLAR ALARM, ringing. Continuous. HARRY and RICHIE
come bolting out of the store. Feet pounding.

SIRENS, now, as prowl cars respond to the call.

BAUER

Shit! Shit!

The men pitch forward into a big HEDGE. Crash through.
Into a courtyard, into someone's PARTY. BAUER pulls out
A HANDGUN. Waves it like a wand. People evaporate.

HARRY

PUT THAT THING AWAY.

BAUER

It's not loaded, we should load it--

HARRY

We're not shooting anyone. Go right.

INT. DARKENED LAUNDRY ROOM - SAME

Harry kicks the door, SPLINTERS it. They race inside.
Pull up short, sucking air. Harry shuts the door.

HARRY

We're good. We're not going down, hear
me? Richie. Hey. You with me..?

A VOICE rings out:

VOICE (O.S.)

FREEZE.

It stops them cold. They turn as one --

BAUER

Oh, for Chrissakes.

It's a middle-aged SOCIETY WOMAN. In an EVENING GOWN.
Holding a GLOCK PISTOL.

HARRY

Ma'am... look, we... we didn't do
anything, we're not dangerous --

BAUER looks down: his own GUN, in plain sight --

BAUER

Right! Look, see? It's not even loaded.

He snatches it up to SHOW her --

HARRY

Richie, NO!

Bang--! Her gunshot passes THROUGH HARRY'S ARM.

Kills his friend. BAUER collapses.

Echo, dying away. Harry, in shock. Looks at his pierced
arm. Looks at his buddy -- a cut-string puppet.

HARRY

You bitch...!

13

THROWS the gun. Just does it, without thinking. She
DUCKS... He finds the WINDOW. Takes a running start --

13

EXT. SIDE YARD

Comes out, an explosion of glass. Hits, rolls -- Comes
up running as the NEXT SHOT blows splinters from a tree.

A POLICE CAR

Comes squawling around the corner. Fuck. Harry flings
himself down an alley. The night, ALIVE with sirens.

He runs, breath sawing in and out. Rips off his jacket.
Doesn't break stride, wraps his bleeding arm.

UP AHEAD: People, milling outside a doorway. Sipping
coffee. AA meeting on break? He slows to a brisk walk.

BEHIND HIM, a prowl car rounds the corner.

He's got 10 seconds. Nods to the group ahead. Hi, how are you, I'm so fucking nonchalant, makes a production of YAWNING, ho-hum, hope they catch that fugitive --

Ducks into the building, fast. Jacket, masking his wound. A POLICE SPOTLIGHT stabs into the foyer, shit...! Harry picks a door, any door. Goes through it, FAST --

INT. ROOM

A tidy office. THREE PEOPLE look up, surprised --

At Harry, sweating. Going into shock. His face twitches and there's blood where Bauer SPRAYED him.

AN ELDERLY WOMAN

(frowns disapproval)

Sir, that's the wrong door. Please go back out and wait with the others --

One portly man is studying Harry... abruptly interrupts:

MAN

Grace, I'd say this guy's ready to go. Doesn't he look ready to go?

We recognize DABNEY SHAW, the producer from before. He smiles encouragingly. Harry, bewildered -- What's going on, don't they notice he can barely stand up..?

EXT. BUILDING - SAME TIME

The POLICE CRUISER stops; a COP gets out, scans faces as

INT. OFFICE - BACK WITH HARRY

The seated trio watches, expectantly -- Harry's got paper in his hand. Gunshot wound, hidden. Blinks. Swallows.

Incredibly, begins to do an ACTING SCENE with the woman.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Where is he, where's Rafael?

Harry, shaking. Breathing hard. Reads:

HARRY

Um... beat on me all night. You want me to give up my client, you can go spit.

Harry is swaying. Close to blacking out. Jaw clenched. We hear the COP, now. Outside the door.

ELDERLY WOMAN

Quit acting like the goodguy, jerkoff.
You got your partner killed.

Harry looks up, startled. Recovers, looks down --
It's there. In the Goddamn script. He swallows hard.

ELDERLY WOMAN

He was in over his head, you knew it.
You pulled that trigger. YOU killed him.

Harry leaps, SLAMS his fist on the desk. The casting
people jump -- He's delirious. Reality and fiction BLUR.

HARRY

I didn't kill him, he... he wanted in...

At which point, Harry begins to cry. Wracking sobs.

HARRY

Why... Why'd he... have to come in on it,
told him to stay home... Stupid son of a
bitch... Shoulda been me, I killed him..!
(breaks down, hugging himself)
...I'm sorry... I'm sorry...

Silence. Casting people, staring. Harry sobbing. THE
COP throws open the door, hand on his holster --

COP

Oh, wow, sorry.
(to Harry, lamely)
Good luck.

He leaves. The casting people look at Harry. At each
other. SHAW has a gleam in his eye. Whispers:

SHAW

This tape goes in the L.A pouch. And get
me Gay Perry on the line, will you..?

He draws deep on his cigar... CUT BACK TO PRESENT DAY:

INT. OPULENT HOUSE - LOS ANGELES - PARTY STILL RAGING

HARRY, looking thoroughly out of place. Reaching for a
fork, his tie in the tomato sauce, we HEAR:

HARRY (V.O.)

Now they're screen-testing me, is that
wild? Anyway, that's how I got here.
(beat)

(MORE)

HARRY (V.O.) (cont'd)

Now, Harmony -- different story, she was destined to be here. That's her, by the way, at the fireplace. Harmony Faith Lane; IQ: 166. Job: Actress. Go figure.

New character -- our focus shifts to A WOMAN at the fireplace. Alternately eating pizza, sipping coffee.

A predatory ICM TYPE listens, impatient, as she RANTS with a surprising fierceness:

HARMONY

... yes, racist. I'm serious. Look, the other reindeer laugh at him. They scorn him -- then, out of the blue, they NEED him for something, he's good as a fucking... foglight, or whatever, so tell me, how's that any different from, 'Don't talk to Reggie, he's black. Oh, wait, he can play basketball? Sign him up!'

(yawns)

Sorry. Worked a double shift, then catered. Go ahead, ask me why I'm here. God knows. Rudolph, we teach it to kids, little kids. Hah. Want some coffee?

She gets up to fetch some, he never gets in a word.

CUT TO BLACK -- Pause... then SUPER:

HARMONY

HARRY (V.O.)

Most people would say Harmony got to the party because of the stuff with the robot. I'll get to that -- but for me? The robot, uh-uh -- I'd go back a bit farther. Like I said, destiny.

EXT. BACKYARD CARNIVAL, CIRCA 1978 - DAYTIME

HARMONY, AGE 7: We're on her face. In the b.g., a sign: **Harold the Great**, it reads sideways. Now the tricky camera ROTATES 45 degrees: the SIGN, no longer sideways --

She's lying FLAT, encased by a painted wooden BOX. Head out one end, shoes the other. Big SMILE...

HARMONY

Harold, use your awesome might -- Save me from this hopeless plight!

HAROLD THE GREAT, age 9, nods to an OLDER KID: This kid in turn revs a CHAINSAW, starts cutting through the box.

HARRY (V.O.)

She found her vocation early in life.

Chainsaw, ROARING. HAROLD flicks his WAND, intones:

HAROLD

Alakazaaaam----!

Harmony starts to SCREAM.

SHRIEKING. Writhing in agony. Tears streaming. Harold stares dumbly. The kid with the saw, horrified --

Chaos. ADULTS converge on the scene. Harmony is twitching. In shock. Her DAD leaps to the stage. Grips the lid, HEAVES OPEN THE BOX. Eyes wide, staring --

Harmony is unmarked. Unscathed. She looks at her father. Looks at Harold, solemnly says:

HARMONY

I'm going to be an actress.

She has time to smile before Daddy's BACKHAND erases it.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Harmony reads to sick MOM, who lies in bed, beautiful...

HARRY (V.O.)

Papa felt her slipping away... he blamed her school, her friends... truth is, the culprit was right down the hall; that's right, Harmony's role model, growing up. Her hero, her best friend --

(move in on Mom)

Huh..? No, not her. Him.

Whoops--! The camera breezes PAST MOM... stops on the BOOK COVER. A steely-eyed MAN eyeballs us... The Title: *You'll Never Die In This Town Again* - A Jonny Gossamer Thriller

HARMONY

"Go to hell, Jonny Gossamer," she told me. She'd poured herself into a seamless dress. From the look of it she'd spilled some. 'Lady,' I said, 'Where I live, it's not much of a commute...'"

HARRY (V.O.)

Jonny offered salvation; he spoke from the pages of cheap paperbacks, and told of a promised land... called Los Angeles.

ECU: SILLY PUTTY - PEELED FROM A BOOK COVER

JONNY GOSSAMER'S image, unspooling before us, as --

EXT. FRONT PORCH - NIGHTTIME

HARMONY displays the putty to her SISTER JENNA, age 6. Jenna grins -- BOUNCES it, watches it soar sky high...

TIME CUT: BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT

Separate beds. HARMONY and JENNA; both asleep.

HARRY (V.O.)

She wished he was real, prayed he would come to Indiana --

POV HARMONY: The sliver of LIGHT underneath the bedroom door. Suddenly eclipsed by a SHADOW.

HARRY (V.O.)

... To save little sister Jenna -- who Papa wouldn't leave alone.

HARMONY, IN THE DARK, NOW

Staring numbly. Her sister's bed is now empty. Outside the door, Papa's retreating footfalls. CUT TO:

EXT. FRONT LAWN - IN THE GRASS

Papa turns on an upstairs LAMP, light STABS DOWNWARD -- Illuminates the SILLY PUTTY... Jonny's rugged face. Now hideously distorted, twisted. Looking up... Helpless to interfere.

HARRY (V.O.)

After Mom died, the girls were bundled off to Foster Care -- good news for Jenna.

(beat)

Not long after that, Harmony skipped.

FLASH TO: A BUS, TOOLING DOWN I-79.

Inside, Harmony -- now a TEENAGER -- sleeps fitfully, a Jonny Gossamer book in her lap. Her eyelid twitches.

HARRY (V.O.)

On the bus to L.A., she had a nightmare; in it, her running away made the Foster parents so mad that they gave her sister back to Papa. Harmony woke up sweating... then decided that this couldn't happen, not in a good world where heroes existed.

(beat)

She didn't stop the bus.

BACK TO THE PRESENT: PARTY HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

HARMONY, exhausted. She ambles along, sipping coffee. Stops to admire a set of walnut bookshelves --

HARRY (V.O.)

And that's how she got to the same party as me. Now, back to our sto --

The ONSCREEN IMAGE abruptly FREEZES. Harry swears:

HARRY (V.O.)

Shit, I skipped something. Dammit! The whole robot bit, I make a big deal, and then I, like, totally forget. Fuck. This is bad narrating. Like my Dad telling a joke, "Oh, wait! Back up, I forgot to tell you, the cowboy rode a blue horse." Fuck. Anyway, I don't even know if you wanna see it now, but here's the fucking robot stuff, for your viewing pleasure. I'm gonna look for something else to fuck up. Can I say fuck more?

INT. NICHOLS CANYON GUEST HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

HARMONY, age 34, splayed across the bed. Reading. In the background, the blue flicker of late-nite TV.

ANNOUNCER (ON TV)

Now back to PROTOCOP, starring Jeff Neal.

ANGLE ON TV -- PROTOCOP blows holes in drug dealers. Harmony looks up at the screen for a moment.

She puts aside her book... reaches for the TV remote and that's when she hears the loud THUMP.

Her head snaps upward, alert -- CRASH! No mistake this time. Breaking glass. She snatches up a wooden BAT.

Meanwhile, no HINT of caution by the intruder. CLUMPING footsteps. Ponderous. Harmony inches down the hall...

Reaches a corner. Hazards a look --

SENSE DEPARTS. Fish grow wings; the Cubs win it in four.

PROTOCOL, PROTECTOR OF MAN -- all six-five of him. Pneumatic joints. Robot HEAD, swiveling. Impossible.

His back is to her. She darts a look at her bedroom:

TV SCREEN -- PROTOCOL. Someone's throwing acid on him.

Returns her gaze to the kitchen --

Can't be real, she says, as the crimefighter bumps her cookie jar to the floor, where it SHATTERS --

And that's when it gets REALLY weird. The robot bends, joints clicking... Starts to eat the cookies. He's brought cheap WINE to wash them down. Enough is enough:

HARMONY

HEY, YOU! FREEZE!!

The behemoth reacts, STARTLED-! Stands. WHACKS his head on a cabinet. Lurches drunkenly onto the BALCONY --

Slips on a coiled HOSE. Crashes through the flimsy railing. Silence... followed by a distant THUD.

CUT TO: VIDEO FOOTAGE - SLIGHTLY GRAINY

Flashing lights. Crime scene tape. A REPORTER does a stand-up, breath pluming in the chill air:

REPORTER (TO CAMERA)

... sources close to Neal, who has not worked as an actor in two years, said he seemed despondent earlier tonight, during a re-run of PROTOCOL. The actor, who retains the costume he wore on the show, allegedly dressed up, stumbled down the canyon road, and wandered into this Hollywood Hills guest house --

(points behind him)

-- where aspiring actress Harmony Faith Lane was shocked to discover him.

ANGLE ON HARMONY - VIDEO INTERVIEW

HARMONY

I'd jog by, "hi, hello," that kind of thing... I feel for the guy, it's like... it's like this city can't get enough of messing with people; like putting a whoopie cushion on the seat of the electric chair. Like that.

PULL BACK -- from a 52-inch SCREEN. WIDEN to reveal a paneled OFFICE... Producer DABNEY SHAW looks up briefly --

SHAW

Huh. Those are some tits.
(to his assistant)
Find out who she is, invite her to something.

HARRY (V.O.)

And there it was. *Destiny, bingo.*

BACK TO THE PRESENT: PARTY HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

HARMONY, exactly where we left her. Admiring BOOKS. Having coffee. Starts to turn away. Turns back, blinks:

HER POV: It's the Jonny Gossamer books. All of them.

She can scarcely believe it. Reverently withdraws the titles, one by one from the shelf, scanning covers...

*Small Town Boy Makes Dead * Little Girl Lust * Die Job*

She shuffles off, still clutching a book... CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - SAME

FLOP. Harmony hits the bed. Two days, no sleep. She drowns off... book slipping from slack fingers.

Lies, skirt hiked, hip laid bare. Party noise, continuous. The door opens --

The ICM TYPE we saw earlier peers in. Debates, if only briefly -- Enters. Shuts the door behind him.

Stands over her. Puts a hand on her thigh, squeezes....

VOICE (O.S.)

You'd better be her doctor.

The guy spins around, caught -- HARRY stands framed in the doorway. Big as life. Eyes flat. Cold.

HARRY

Walk away. Don't think. Just do it.

ICM TYPE

Why? What are you, her brother or something..? This is none of your business. I'll fuck you up, man.

HARRY

No. You'll try, and that little experiment will end in tears, my friend.

The guy stares at him. Makes no move to leave.

HARRY

Again, for the cheap seats -- do not THINK. Walk... the fuck... away. Or let's you and me go outside, but it's past my bedtime, MAKE A CHOICE.

Eyes flat. Dead. Other guy thoroughly unnerved, CUT TO:

EXT. LAWN - NIGHT

Harry gets the shit beat out of him.

The ICM guy has him on the ground. Harry curled up in a defensive ball... The guy WAILING ON HIM. Over and over.

The guy spits on Harry. Walks back inside the house.

Harry kneels, sucking air. A shadow falls across him -- GAY PERRY reaches out, helps him to his feet.

HARRY

Thanks... One of these days, buddy..?
I'm gonna actually learn how to fight.

POV - HARRY: He sees HARMONY, stagger to a car. Gets in, as the ICM type hops behind the wheel, roars off...

GAY PERRY --

You okay, man? Want some peroxide..?

HARRY

Nah. Thanks, though.

GAY PERRY

(extends a hand)
Perry van Shrike.

HARRY

Harry Lockhart. Whoa, wait a minute, I heard about you, um, the whatchamacallit, the consultant, you must be --
(stops himself)
Um, I mean...

GAY PERRY

Gay Perry?

HARRY

(feigns ignorance)
Oh! Right, right, ha, ha. Dabney calls you that. You guys must be old buddies.

GAY PERRY

Five years now.

HARRY

Five years, wow. You still gay?

GAY PERRY

No, I'm hip-deep in pussy, I just liked the name so much I couldn't change it.

INT. SPACIOUS KITCHEN - SAME

Harry winces as Perry applies peroxide to the cut lip.

GAY PERRY

Dabney wants you to take detective lessons.

HARRY

Come again?

GAY PERRY

He's into this "method" thing, says you are, too. Hold still...
(daubs beneath Harry's eye)
Tomorrow I got a surveillance, you game?

HARRY

Surveillance. Who's the guy, like, a crimelord or something?

GAY PERRY

Please. I'm guessing a sad, lonely little man who singlehandedly haunts his own house up in the hills.

Harry stares -- whistles softly:

HARRY

Wow. That was incredibly gay.

Just then the HOST happens by, double-takes at Harry:

DEXTER

Good God --

HARRY

You should see the other guy.

GAY PERRY

Harry, I'd like you to meet Harlan
Dexter. Our generous host.

DEXTER

Ah, of course! You're Dabney's golden
boy. From back east. I hope it isn't
past your bedtime.

HARRY

No, sir. Mom used to say I had the neon
disease. When the neon lights came on,
I'd wake up.

DEXTER

I'm afraid I'm similarly afflicted. My
daughter lived 10 years in Paris, says
it's heaven for the vampire set --

SUDDENLY, everything FREEZES. The film comes to a
screeching STOP. Folks suspended, mid-sentence, we HEAR--

HARRY (V.O.)

Okay, I apologize. That is a terrible
scene; it's like, why was that in the
movie, gee, you think it'll COME BACK
LATER, MAYBE? I hate that, a TV's on,
talking about the new power plant, hmmm,
wonder where the climax will happen; or
the shot of the cook in HUNT FOR RED
OCTOBER. So anyhow, sorry.

THE MOVIE RESUMES. Dexter sees a mammoth CAKE go by:
Happy Birthday Ronnie, it pinkly proclaims.

DEXTER

Excuse me, apparently, I'm to help cut
this monstrosity.

Dexter leads it OUTSIDE, where a generic L.A. blonde
shrieeks, gives Daddy a big old hug... Perry scowls:

GAY PERRY

Mom's gone; now it's just him and his little born-again bundle of joy.

HARRY

Precious.

GAY PERRY

Isn't it, though?

(chuckles)

Three months ago she was prosecuting him, he called her a cunt. Welcome to L.A.

HARRY (V.O.)

More exposition, please. Christ, we're really shoveling it.

EXT. VALET AREA - NIGHT

The valets are busy chasing some DEER out of the road -- as HARRY & GAY PERRY wait for their cars.

HARRY

... That girl tonight, man, I'm tellin' you, she had this... quality, like... like the girl in high school, you know the one you never could have? The one still haunts you..?

GAY PERRY

I had that. Bobby Mills.

Harry makes a lemon face; Perry tips the valet, gets in his car. Harry, trying lamely for camaraderie --

HARRY

You should, um, track him down. I got five bucks says you could still get him.

GAY PERRY

That's funny. I got a ten, says, "Pass the pepper." And a couple quarters, do harmony on "Moonlight in Vermont."

HARRY

Huh?

GAY PERRY

Talking money.

HARRY

A talking monkey?

GAY PERRY

Yes, a talking monkey. Ugly sucker.
Traveled here from the future, only says
"figus." Detective lessons, tomorrow.
Don't forget.

(starts to pull away, stops)
Oh, and Harry, your girl..? I know her,
she did some work for me. You might try
the Domino Room.

With that, he roars off down the sloping drive -- CUT TO:

FINGERS ON A KEYBOARD. An upbeat riff ushers us into:

INT. THE DOMINO ROOM - NIGHT.

HARRY enters the bar. Orients himself. Eyes, roving...
An ABUNDANTLY-BREASTED GIRL comes up to him:

GIRL

Hey, there. I'm Flicka.

HARRY

Hey.

GIRL

What do you do?

Again the question. Harry blinks.

HARRY

I'm a private detective. You?

GIRL

Stewardess.

(pause, then:)

Nice to meet you. 'Bye.

Wanders off. Easy come, easy go. He scans the crowd --

THERE. Harmony. At the bar. No sign of the asshole
from before. Instead, a semi-attractive female FRIEND.

As he watches, the FRIEND heads for the bathroom.
Harmony alone, bingo -- he ambles up, trying for slick:

HARRY

'Evening. I'm Harry.

He winces, makes a show of rubbing his shoulder.

HARRY

Mmmm. Sore.

(cracks his neck)

I mean physically, not, you know, like a guy who's angry in the 1950's.

(beat)

I'm visiting from New York. Um, I think I saw you at a party, couple hours ago..?

She doesn't look up. Sips her drink, says:

HARMONY

Why?

HARRY

Why what?

HARMONY

Why me? Seriously, how about that girl sitting over there, look, she's very pretty.

HARRY

Which one?

HARMONY

On the left. Next to bald Kevin Costner.

Indicates a bald guy. Looks vaguely like Kevin Costner.

HARRY

Jesus, that's reaching. Um, look, I'm interrupting, I feel badly, at least let me buy you a--

HARMONY

Bad.

HARRY

Bad. Um, what's--?

HARMONY

You feel bad. Badly is an adverb, so to "feel badly" would be saying that the mechanism which allows you to feel is broken.

HARRY

Well, then.

(clears his throat)

That girl over there, you said..?

HARMONY

Which way you lookin'..?

(shakes her head)

Nix, nix, that's the blonde; blonde's pathetic.

HARRY

Pathetic, I see. Because..?

HARMONY

Well, for starters, she's been fucked more times than she's had hot meals.

HARRY

Right. I heard about that, it was neck and neck, then she skipped lunch --

HARMONY

Worst thing, though..?

HARRY

Do tell.

HARMONY

Worst thing is she's 35 years old, still trying to act. I see her in auditions; It's over, baby, you missed. Get a clue.

HARRY

That's charitable of you.

(beat)

Mind if I ask how old you are?

HARMONY

Go for it.

HARRY

Okay. How old are you?

HARMONY

Thirty-four.

(chews ice)

I'm a baby.

She grins. Upends her glass.

HARRY

Where's your buddy? The guy you left the party with?

HARMONY

Fucking asshole. I just needed a ride.

(eats peanuts)

Sorry. I swear a lot. Did you know the host? I didn't. He looked really familiar, though. Probably an actor.

Before he can reply, the FRIEND returns.

FEMALE FRIEND

Buzz, buzz. Go away, Mister fly.

HARRY

I'm talking to your friend here.

FEMALE FRIEND

Yeah, well, she doesn't wanna talk to you. Leave.

HARRY

Easy, Sunshine, I'll have her back to you in a minute.

FEMALE FRIEND

She doesn't have a minute.

He starts to retort -- bites it back. What's the point?

HARRY

If you change your mind about that drink, I'll be over there with old Timothy Hutton.

Harmony glances over -- blurts a LAUGH. Can't help it, he's spot-on. Harry gestures to the bartender to cover the girls' drinks. Debates which credit card to use --

HARMONY grabs his VISA card. Makes it dance on the bar:

HARMONY

Pick me, pick me!

(deep bass voice:)

No, pick me!

She grabs his MASTERCARD. Makes the two cards fight. Harry looks at her like she's grown a tail. She giggles.

FEMALE FRIEND

Stop it! Why are you humoring him?

(to Harry:)

There's a table in that far corner..?

It's a recommended cheeseball hangout.

HARRY

Your mouth is a recommended place to put a sock.

(beat)

Princess... Scary friend... Goodnight.

He shrugs on his coat. Turns away. HARMONY, looking more and more agitated, until, *finally* --

HARMONY

Goddammit, Harry Lockhart, are you gonna recognize me or not?

That stops him. He turns back, frowning. Squints --

HARMONY

Embrey, Indiana!

(he's still frowning)

Loved snakes, scared of spiders..?

(exasperated)

God's sakes, you -- you were the Amazing Harold, no, HAROLD THE GREAT, you cut me in half, remember?

HARRY

God... My God, Harmony..? Is that you?

Realization, dawning. Both frozen in place --

Then she smiles and so does he and the years all drop and shatter. He ENGULFS her in a hug. SPINS her.

The FRIEND gapes in disbelief. CUT TO BLACK --

HARRY (V.O.)

Okay, Okay. I was a bad narrator, I skipped something. The little kid, the one who cut her in half? The magician, right, that kid. Well, that was me. I apologize. Harry, Harold, you shoulda caught that. Some detectives.

INT. CORNER BOOTH - SEVERAL DRINKS LATER

Harmony's FRIEND, dazed. Out of it. Head tilted back. HARMONY strips the label from a beer bottle, frowning...

HARMONY

Leaving my sister... Leaving her alone back there..? Hardest thing I ever did.

Harry can't stop staring, mesmerized. We HEAR, supered:

HARRY (V.O.)

Connections. Remember how I said this high school chick haunted me? How seeing Harmony made me think of her..?

FLASH TO: PEP RALLY - CHEERLEADERS

Young HARMONY, age 16, among them. Kicking. Cheering.

HARRY (V.O.)

Well, that's 'cause it fucking WAS her, I'm, like, the stupidest motherfucker on earth.

(sighs)

It all came flooding back, how I was the one she confided in; the one she trusted. Meanwhile, she was doing every other guy in school.

BASEBALL DUGOUT - TWILIGHT

Her head leans against YOUNG HARRY's chest. She's crying.

HARRY (V.O.)

It was the first time I felt it, how pitying someone and wanting to fuck them can get all tangled up in your head. Overwhelming sadness, meanwhile you got a Rodney. Is that sick? I think that's sick.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY: HARMONY, tipsy. Excitedly reminiscing.

HARMONY

Hey-! Remember when we were real little, a movie crew came to town?

HARRY

Right..! Mystery flick, who the hell was the detective, Jonny something --

HARMONY

Gossamer.

HARRY

Jonny Gossamer, right. Your Mom bought all the books. Went nuts.

HARMONY

God, that was forever ago.

Pause... then, very quietly, she says:

HARMONY

I didn't get famous, Harry.

He watches her flatten the beer label in her palm.
Leans forward, very intense, pronounces one word:

HARRY

Yet.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DOMINO ROOM - NIGHT

HARRY AND HARMONY. Laughing, silly... They walk, hips brushing. The female FRIEND waits sullen in a nearby car.

HARRY

... You're shitting me. Which one?

HARMONY

With the bear that goes, I prefer
Genero's, but I'm a --

HARRY

I'm a bear, I suck the heads off fish,
that was you?

HARMONY

Yeah, well... Woo-hoo, commercial.

She waves dismissively. Harry frowns:

HARRY

What are you, nuts? You, like, beat the
odds. National commercial --

HARMONY

Harry. Stop.

HARRY

I musta watched that thing a hundred
times --

HARMONY

Harry, it's NOTHING, it's bullshit, well,
okay, actually there was one sorta cool
moment, I do this little wave --
(catches herself)

NO. Forget it. It was nothing special.

HARRY

Yeah? Well, guess what, black Patrick Swayze doesn't think so.

He points to a black man at a pay phone. The guy *does*, he looks like Swayze. Harmony sprays liquor.

A pregnant pause. Harry feels giddy, Light-headed.

HARRY

Listen. Come back to my hotel. Bring your friend. One drink, swear. You'll be home faster'n you can say Jack Robinson.

HARMONY

Maybe, maybe not, I can say Jack Robinson really fast, listen: *jackrobinson*.

He tilts her chin up. She meets his gaze, brazen...

SLOW MOTION, she upends the flask, drinks... Never breaks eye contact. They're gonna have sex. CUT TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL SUITE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sex, in progress. Two LUMPS, swaddled in a Polo comforter. Rolling around together -- CUT TO:

SAME PLACE - SEVERAL HOURS LATER

Harry comes awake slowly. Senses a warm body, moulded against him. Glances over in that direction --

Swears violently. It's not Harmony; it is, of course, the FRIEND. He claps a hand to his head. Looks at his watch -- 4:42 a.m. Eases out of bed, grabs his pants...

Tiptoes into the LIVING ROOM. Spots her purse. Grabs it, roots inside. ADDRESS BOOK. Finds the page...

EXT. L.A. CITY STREET

Harry's rental car blows by, down Sunset Blvd.

EXT. HARMONY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

KNOCK, KNOCK, KNOCK. Pause... The door opens. HARMONY is there. Terry cloth robe. Hair in disarray. Pissed:

HARMONY

Do you know what time it is?

HARRY

I know, I know. I'm really sorry.
God... you still look great. Stunning.

HARMONY

What are you doing here?

HARRY

Good question. This will sound crazy,
but... I don't remember the hours between
twelve and two. It's a blur --

HARMONY

Where's Marleah?
(off his look:)
Marleah? The girl you --

HARRY

Marleah, right. Fell asleep at my place.
I don't remember seeing you leave --

HARMONY

I left when you still had your tongue
down her throat.

HARRY

(blanches)
Really..? Oh, no, no....That's... wrong
throat. Wrong one, that's bad...

HARMONY

You got ten seconds.

HARRY

Okay, okay. I came here because...
(deep breath)
It sounds nuts. I just think you're so
intelligent, and so attractive, I --

HARMONY

Okay, stop. That's plenty.

HARRY

But I --

HARMONY

ENOUGH. Oh... my...God. You come here
at five in the morning to tell me how
much you like me, after you just fucked
my friend?

HARRY

No, no, see, that's just it -- I didn't.

HARMONY

You said you don't remember!!

HARRY

Right! And if I was that drunk, I could never have gotten it up. See?

(beat)

Look, I know this is... outrageous. I'm not pretending it's normal, or that I'm normal. I just... chickened out, and --

He yanks his hand back, BARELY in time to keep his fingers. SLAMM!!!! He's alone. Begins to walk --

As the streetlights blink off, one by one.

INSIDE WITH HARMONY - AT THE WINDOW

She peers after him. Waits 'til he's far enough away. Then lets go and when the tears come, they gush...

HARRY (V.O.)

I think about that night... The last sane one, as it happens. See, I was about to begin detective lessons. I'd continue to attract pretty L.A. women... but none of them would be breathing.

CUT TO BLACK. A pause... then we SUPER:

DAY TWO -- THE LADY IN THE LAKE

INT. CAR - NIGHT

SLEET rushes out of the dark. Pelts the windshield.

GAY PERRY drives, Harry beside him. Car, a mellow cocoon. A sign reads *Big Bear Lake, 5 Miles*.

HARRY

-- See, Jonny Gossamer would always take two cases, right? Seemingly unrelated. One's normal and the other, it's always some wild shit; then at the end they're connected, see, it's all one case.

GAY PERRY

Yeah, I get that all the time. Hey, could you not root around in there--?

Harry's pawing through the glove box. Extracts a small nickel-plated DERRINGER. Whistles softly.

HARRY

Tiny. Is it real?

GAY PERRY

(nods)

Derringer. Fires three rounds. I call it my "faggot gun."

HARRY

Because--?

GAY PERRY

Because it's good for three shots, then you drop it and find something better.

Harry's face contorts, like he just ate cat litter. He replaces the gun. Perry chuckles.

GAY PERRY

You asked, chief. Back to the lesson. Our client, so you know, is one Allison Ames, A-M-E-S, female. She's paying for a video surveillance.

Harry dutifully takes out a pad, writes AMES.

GAY PERRY

Stopped by her house today? Ms. Ames is there with nothing on but a radio. Lights a cigarette, sits in my lap...

HARRY

Really?

GAY PERRY

Of course not, idiot. Hired me over the phone, paid by credit card. This job is not interesting. It's boring, write that down, use like, three extra o's. Booooring. Good. Now circle it.

HARRY

Circled. Five o's plus I drew a picture of a little sleeping guy, see..?

GAY PERRY

Good. Now eat the paper, which is better than the drive-thru food we'll be having on our surveillance.

EXT. TOURIST CABIN - NIGHT

HARRY and GAY PERRY come loping into view, hunched low...

Squat behind a woodpile, out of sight. Perry removes his gloves. Takes out a mini-cam, grins:

GAY PERRY

Our Ms. Ames wants up close, through-the-window footage. Glamorous, huh? Hand me the blue bag.

(beat)

So what's the deal with your girl, she dissed you in high school, you said..?

HARRY

Huh? Oh. No, not really. I mean, she... fucked everyone but me. That's not true either, she made a concession. Agreed not to fuck my best friend Chook Chutney, even if he asked.

GAY PERRY

That was nice of her. Okay. Stay put, stay quiet.

Perry hunkers forward, toward the wood-shingled house -- at which point, THE LIGHTS GO OUT inside.

Perry stops in his tracks. Ears pricked. Now what..?

The front DOOR begins to open. Perry BOLTS. Back behind the woodpile, just in time --

As a LARGE MAN exits the cabin. Crosses to his parked car, whistling. A hooded parka makes an ID impossible.

HARRY

Where the hell's he going?

GAY PERRY

How the hell should I know? I didn't make these arrangements, my client did.

They listen as the car engine REVS TO LIFE --

Along with it, a repetitive THUDDING sound. Rhythmic. HEADLIGHTS sweep past -- the guy's leaving.

HARRY

What's wrong with his car?

GAY PERRY

What do I look like, his fucking mechanic? Grab that bag and follow me.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - LAKESHORE - NIGHT

PERRY'S Jaguar drifts to the shoulder, lights extinguished. Both men emerge, silent.

HARRY

There. Up ahead.

Harry points through the trees to ANOTHER CAR, pulled over under a canopy of pines. Perry shakes his head:

GAY PERRY

Not him. Not the same car.

HARRY

What the hell? He's gotta somewhere, he turned off right in front of us --

They trudge forward, into the frozen woods. CUT TO:

EXT. LAKE'S EDGE - NIGHT

The two men reach the end of a rutted dirt TRACK. The trees give way abruptly -- Nothing. Only the lake. They exchange bewildered looks. Birds call. Wind blows.

HARRY

Where is he?

Just then, as if on cue -- a CAR ENGINE becomes audible. Approaching through the woods at a good clip.

GAY PERRY

Get down.

He grabs Harry, they both go over the embankment. Stumble downward 30 feet. Perry clutches the video case.

Up top, the ENGINE, drawing closer. HEADLIGHTS, above them now... Keeps coming... Something's not right.

They realize simultaneously: the car's NOT SLOWING.

They DIVE for cover--!

Hit the dirt, HUG it, while above them TREES AND BRUSH DETONATE, blasted to splinters as the CAR launches --

SAILS OUT INTO SPACE. Executes a lazy roll in mid-air...

SLAMS TO EARTH. Gouges it...!

Two feet from HARRY'S HEAD. Snow ERUPTS. Slams him. Fills his mouth. He rolls to water's edge, looks up --

Sees the vehicle BOUNCE, upside down... Out into the frigid lake. Impacts. Hood crumpled. Car, bobbing, headlights spearing every which-way.

He can't remember getting to his feet, but suddenly HARRY is moving forward. Vision blurred. Choking on snow.

Plunges into the water. Flaps and flounders to the car.

Driver side panel, at water level. He HEAVES -- wrenches it open. Eyes darting left, right. Reacts, startled:

The car has no driver. Interior, empty. Registers briefly that the GAS PEDAL is wedged to the floor.

Harry backs off, sputtering. Walk-stumbles toward shore, NUMB, but now what's this, running full out, it's PERRY --

YELLING something. Hard to hear, sound muffled...

GAY PERRY

Get the keys, in the ignition, THE KEYS!

Harry looks at him, half-witted --

GAY PERRY

The sound, the sound we heard, GRAB THE FUCKING KEYS.

PERRY, blundering headlong through the water. Legs churning, as, without warning -- THE CAR GOES UNDER.

All in a rush, whooooosh...! TRUNK, last thing to go --

Perry goes with it. Harry watches, thunderstruck, as the detective PLUNGES into the freezing water. Vanishes. The surface appears pitch BLACK.

From underwater, a muffled report, BANG--! Pause. HARRY, helpless. He stares. Shaking with cold...

PERRY SURFACES. Comes swarming up out of the deep. Arms locked AROUND SOMETHING, a sodden shape --

GAY PERRY

... Help me... God...d-dammit...!

HARRY is there, clutching Perry. Hauling him up, then just as quickly recoiling --

As a GIRL IN A FLOWER DRESS emerges from the water like a Kraken. Perry gestures frantically to GRAB HER ARMS. Numbly, Harry complies --

SHORE - SECONDS LATER

The GIRL flops from their grasp. Hits, lies still. Hair, plastered across her face. PERRY collapses.

GAY PERRY

...L-locked in the trunk.. had to... to s-shoot it open...

He looks over at her -- lets out an anguished sound. POV PERRY: A dead doll in a flower-print dress.

HARRY

Is... is she dead..?

GAY PERRY

No... she's j-just... resting her eyes, of COURSE she's fucking d-dead... her neck is broken...

The girl's skirt is hiked, she has no underwear. Harry tugs the dress down, a useless bit of chivalry.

Perry scans the trees. Reacts, startled --

TWO MEN IN SKI MASKS staring down at him. He locks eyes with one, briefly -- Then they BOLT. Into the trees.

AN ENGINE ROARS. Squeal of tires as a CAR drives off.

HARRY

That car we saw... you get the plate?

GAY PERRY

Didn't... b-bother.

HARRY

Me neither.

(beat)

So, this sort of thing happen a lot?

Perry shoots him a look.

HARRY

Easy, man, kidding. Come on, let's beat it before the cops show.

GAY PERRY

Nix. We... go straight to the cops.

HARRY

Exactly, the cops, who will have no trouble believing that she broke her neck...

(points)

BEFORE you shot her in the head.

Her face, what we see of it, appears beaten to a pulp -- Scalp, deeply GOUGED by a bullet.

Perry's bullet. He groans, buries his face in his hands.

Wind, soughing... From the rippling lake, a soft splash... Perry struggles to his feet. Shivering.

GAY PERRY

Okay. We're outta here.

(frowns)

Where's my gun?

Harry shifts, uneasy. Swallows hard:

HARRY

I... I got rid of it.

GAY PERRY

Say again?

HARRY

Just now. I threw it in the lake. I figured, if you wouldn't do it, I would, I got priors in New York, man, I can't be doing this --

GAY PERRY

You threw it away??

He storms toward Harry --

HARRY

Hey, take it easy--!

Perry stops. Takes a deep breath. Composes himself.

GAY PERRY

It's okay. I... I get it, it's okay. I just got a little non-plussed... Sorry.
(pauses, frowning)
Whoa. What the hell...?

Kneels beside the VIDEO case. Gingerly pokes at it:

GAY PERRY

What do you make of this..?

Harry leans in to look -- Perry BOUNCES HIS HEAD off the case. Leaves a dent.

GAY PERRY

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?

Harry staggers backward, swearing. Grips his head.

GAY PERRY

You idiot! You threw my \$650 vintage revolver in the Goddamn lake, what about when they comb the bottom, ever cross your mind, they find that car, they'll find the GODDAMN GUN???

He stands, runs a hand through his hair.

GAY PERRY

Jesus. Look up "idiot" in the dictionary; know what you'll find?

HARRY

Picture of me?

GAY PERRY

NO. The definition of the word IDIOT, which you fucking are!

He turns, fuming. Stomps his way up the embankment.

EXT. LAKESIDE ROAD - DRIVING - NIGHT

PERRY drives. He's donned a dry pair of sweats. Beside him Harry's still soaked, shivering. Perry's mood: foul.

GAY PERRY

Bitch. Lies to me, drags me up here to watch a Goddamn murder... I swear, I'll --
(stops suddenly, points:)
Hey. Over there. See those tracks...?
They weren't there before; they're new.

They exchange puzzled looks. Pause... Perry turns off onto the same rutted dirt TRACK. CUT TO:

HARRY AND PERRY STAND, STUNNED

Staring forlornly. Overlooking the exact same beach --

Now utterly devoid of CORPSES. Female or otherwise. Serene. Peaceful. Water placid.

HARRY

Maybe she, um,... wasn't dead?

GAY PERRY

Piss off. I could reach in and touch her exposed brain.

HARRY

Right. So... the tide drew her out.

GAY PERRY

What tide, IT'S A LAKE.

He shakes his head, gazes out across the dark water.

GAY PERRY

We're getting out of here, now, and this shit better be improving your acting.

EXT. GAY PERRY'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

RAIN, constant. Perry pulls up beside Harry's rental.

HARRY

Sorry about the gun.

GAY PERRY

Whatever. Out. Go. Sleep badly. Any questions, hesitate to call.

HARRY

"Bad"

GAY PERRY

Excuse me?

HARRY

Sleep bad.

GAY PERRY

No -- "badly," it's a fucking adverb. Who taught you grammar?

Harry exits into a DOWNPOUR. Barely shuts the door, Perry's driving off. Harry fumbles for his own keys --

BRAKE LIGHTS. Harry looks up in time to see PERRY reverse -- Pulls alongside again. Window slides down:

HARRY

Look, you don't have to apologize --

GAY PERRY

Eat shit. You forgot this.

He holds out Harry's cel phone, which is RINGING. Makes no move to let Harry in the car. Harry frowns. Leans through the window. Answers the call, half in, half out:

HARRY

Hello..?

VOICE (O.S.)

I'm trying to locate Harry Lockhart.

HARRY

Speaking.

VOICE (O.S.)

Mr. Lockhart, I'm Detective Sergeant Kale, L.A.P.D. Robbery/Homicide Division. Mind answering a question or two?

Harry's stomach does a slow, lazy roll...

HARRY

Of course, Officer. Fire away.

In the car, Perry suddenly goes rigid. Ears pricked --

VOICE (O.S.)

Thank you. Are you familiar with a woman by the name of Harmony Faith Lane?

HARRY

I... What's this in reference to?

VOICE (O.S.)

I'm contacting names in a pocket book, by all indications Ms. Lane's. Your number appears on a piece of paper..?

HARRY

Yeah, so? She took down my number, a lot of girls have my number --

VOICE (O.S.)

I understand. It's just routine, we're required by law to treat every suicide as a potential homicide.

HARRY

Suicide.

VOICE (O.S.)

Yes. Harmony Lane shot herself, sir. Just a few hours ago. She ..wasss .. at hooo... found her... sorr... losing yo...

HARRY

Hello? Hello? Officer..?

The phone's dead. Signal, lost. Harry stands there, pole-axed... like he's taken a punch. Collapses against the car. Looks at Perry, stricken:

HARRY

Harmony... she's dead.

He stands, rain drumming on his head.

HARRY

Killed herself with a gun.

GAY PERRY

I'll be Goddamned.

Harry's face tries on several different expressions. Rejects them all. He looks out at the drowning city.

HARRY

I see her for a day? One DAY?

GAY PERRY

No making sense of it. In the end, I guess things just, um, happen for a re--

HARRY

-- for a reason? Are you serious? Fuck that. Because I fall off a roof, ten people in Baltimore survive a bus crash? Swell. They're enjoying Baltimore, I'm lying with my brains out.

GAY PERRY

I been to Baltimore; you win. Look, I'm really sorry. I gotta go.

He drives off. Harry, in the rain... Christmas lights, reflected in the glossy street. CUT TO:

HARMONY, IN A BRIDAL GOWN

She cuts the cake, looks up -- and SCREAMS. A big BROWN BEAR toasts her, turns to camera and says:

BROWN BEAR

I prefer GENARO'S. But what do I know?
I suck the heads off fish!

An insufficient little epitaph. CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

HARRY enters, looking like someone turned a hose on him.

HARRY (V.O.)

I was tired, I was pissed, I was wetter
than Drew Barrymore at a grunge club. I
needed a hot bath, a warm bed.

(sighs)

But the night had other plans for me.
See, I forgot -- old Jonny, he always had
two cases, remember..?

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - SAME

Christmas MUZAK plays. Harry, completely done in.
Dripping. He fumbles for his key, rounding the corner --

Jumps a foot in the air. Makes a startled "bark" noise.

She's there. Huddled in front of his door. Soaking wet,
shivering cold --

HARMONY. Standing there with puppy-dog eyes. He stands
frozen. Breath suspended. Both of them, in tableau.

She finds her footing. MOVES. A rag doll.

Flops into him, ENGULFS him on impact... The two of them
resemble a very emotional SPONGE. HARRY, struck dumb.

REVERSE -- Tight on Harmony, on her FACE, desolate...
Squeezing him for all she's worth. We hear HARRY:

HARRY

... How..? I... I don't...

She answers him, voice uninflected, without hope:

HARMONY

... she's gone, Harry...

Still in tight CLOSE-UP. A single tear escapes one eye as it comes flashing back to her, all of it --

FLASH: A CRIME SCENE - CHEAP DOWNTOWN HOTEL ROOM

A police PHOTOGRAPHER'S flashbulb goes POP--! A female form, sprawled in a corner. Covered by a SHEET.

Weapon, bagged for evidence -- a Mossberg shotgun.

FLASH TO: HARMONY, speaking to a Homicide cop:

HARMONY

I... I would've given her money. But... we haven't spoken... in years...

COP

Fact is, she stole not only a credit card, but your ID as well -- We're very sorry for the mix-up on our part...

(beat)

Are you willing, at this point, to make a positive identification?

She nods. The barest edge of the SHEET, lifted for her --

HARMONY

There, the... the birthmark.

(swallows hard)

It's her. It's my little sister.

PRESENT DAY - INT. HARRY'S HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

HARMONY paces jerkily to and fro. Soaked, shivering. High on something or other. HARRY can't stop staring...

HARRY

Your sister's been living out HERE?

HARMONY

I didn't know; we hadn't spoken... God, in years. She never forgave me for leaving her. I... thought she'd be safe, I swear, no one told me Papa would get her back --

HARRY

Look, first things first, you're gonna catch pneumonia, let me --

HARMONY

Will you listen?? I have to TELL this,
someone has to believe me!

HARRY

Fine, let me get a blanket, I'll --

HARMONY

I don't need a blanket.

HARRY

You're shivering all over --

HARMONY

I DON'T CARE.

Harry sighs.

HARRY

Okay. Deep breath. Tell me what
happened.

HARMONY

She got into my house. Yesterday, she
musta been broke. Swiped 200 bucks, a
credit card... California I.D. God knows
what else.

HARRY

Back up. If you two hadn't spoken in --

HARMONY

Fourteen years.

HARRY

-- Fourteen years, right, and she didn't
know where you lived, how'd she know
where to --

HARMONY

I WAS ON TV, FOR CHRISSAKES. I was on
the news, you can see the house, see the
number, boom, right there; getting in's
easy, fucking robot broke the windows --

Even as she's freaking out, Harry's drawn to the wet
dress, the pearling beads of water on skin...

HARMONY

Harry, no more secrets; are you a
detective?

The question comes out of the blue. Harry blinks.

HARRY

Who told you that?

HARMONY

My friend Flicka... you said to her
you're a detective, and if that's true I
need your help. If it isn't, goodbye.

Harry, caught totally off guard; how can he handle this?

HARRY

Right. Okay. First off, say I am -- why
me? Have you... looked at alternatives?
There's my colleague, Perry van Shrike --

HARMONY

Perry, I know Perry, I've worked for him.
Please. He's gonna believe me? When I
tell him my sister didn't commit suicide?

Harry stops dead. Favors her with a look of disbelief.
She leans forward, intent. Locks eyes with him, says:

HARMONY

See? That's why I'm here, Harry. I
think my sister was murdered. I need
someone to help me prove it.

Stubs out her cigarette. Begins to talk as we hear:

HARRY (V.O.)

So I sat there, not looking at her
nipples while she told me about her
epiphany at the Rite-Aid on Wilshire.

FLASHBACK: RITE-AID - 40 MINUTES PREVIOUS

Harmony, clutching a happy red basket. Soaked and
miserable; she's been crying. Sees a bottle of Old
Forester. Into the basket, boom. Steps to the checkout
counter. Looks down:

A) bottle of booze; B) three jars of sleeping pills.

Casts about... grabs Twinkies, gum. Whatever's handy,
tosses stuff in without looking. Opens a Twinkie.

THE CHECKER runs her credit card... Shakes his head.
Tries again. Nope. Hands the card back, apologetic.

SNAP BACK TO PRESENT DAY: Harry, looking at her nipples --

HARRY

Um, I'm sorry -- what were you buying..?

HARMONY

Whatever. Stuff. IT DOESN'T MATTER.
Don't you get it? The card she stole
from me was MAXED OUT. Right before she
died, Jenna charged over 2000 dollars,
you don't find that a little weird..? To
some bullshit company. Ah. Plus her
birth control pill for today? Gone. Red
flag. Why'd she bother with her pill?

Still pacing, jittery, jerky; Harry shifts uncomfortably.

HARMONY

So. Can you help me or not?

HARRY

I'd have to check my schedule, but um --

HARMONY

Can you..? Just tell me, I'll get the
hell out of your... your...

Without warning, her eyes lose focus, knees buckle -- She
promptly collapses. Harry has to CATCH her.

He staggers, off balance. Shakes her -- Nix. Out cold.

He deposits her on the BED. Now what..? He grabs a
towel. Fluffs her hair. Steps back, frowning... She's
shivering.

It occurs to Harry, briefly, that he's in much the same
shoes as the asshole guy at Dexter's party.

Except she's gonna get fucking pneumonia. Shit.

He takes a deep breath. Tugs at her sopping dress.
Hauls it dripping up over her head. Looks down --

SEES THE SPIDER crawl from his pillow to her shoulder.

The size of a nickel, maybe (the spider, not the
shoulder). Now it's bound for her NECK...

Harry, appalled. Leans in, takes aim... Goes to flick
the beast, MISSES..! It scuttles beneath Harmony's BRA.

Son of a *bitch*. He gingerly taps the bra cup -- Hello..?
Mr. Spider..? Tap, tap. The breasts therein jiggle
slightly. Harry takes a breath --

Very fast, and begging forgiveness he yanks up the bra.
Sees the black dot against a landscape of pink, FLICKS--!

Sends it sailing. Heaves a sigh of relief...

Just as Harmony opens her eyes.

HARMONY

What the hell do you think you're doing?

HARRY

WHA..?? I... I didn't do anything --

HARMONY

You were feeling my tits.

HARRY

What?? No, listen, there was a big
SPIDER, it was... it was... I...

CUT TO: ONE MINUTE LATER

HARRY, on hands and knees. Crawling up and down,
swearing. HARMONY, under the comforter. Getting bored.

HARRY

Hang on, hang on, you'll see. Where'd
you go, you little bastard...

He changes directions. Harmony sighs:

HARMONY

Look, it's okay, I believe you.

HARRY

No. No, you don't. Just... hold on.
It's here...

HARMONY

Look, whatever. Say you grabbed my tit,
it's... it's life. No biggie. You got
any aspirin?

Harry stops. Regards her in disbelief:

HARRY

A guy grabs your tit, "that's life..?"
No biggie? Christ, what kind of talk is
that? I can't believe you're --

He stops, hearing Harmony GASP: She's looking down.

Harry follows her gaze. She lets slip her bra, exposes one breast -- it's there: just visible, if you squint...

A SQUISHED SPIDER LEG. On her aureole. Trailing buggy fragments. She looks at him, radiant...

Granted, history has seen more romantic moments. Their eyes lock, over the severed leg. She offers a hand --

HARMONY

See there? I trust you.

-- But Harry refuses the offer.

HARRY

Whatever. I'm glad.

Turns away from her. Sullen. Agitated.

HARMONY

What is it? I'm letting you off the hook, you didn't do anything --

HARRY

No, but you thought I did.

(spins on her:)

Listen to me, if I grab your tit, it's a BIGGIE, damn, that sounded wrong, what I mean is, I'M ON THE HOOK. The hook is now my home! Meanwhile, you still talk to me..? Like... like it's an okay lapse, oops, everyone does it, Jesus, what fucking guys are you hanging around? Are you just some... some girl who --

He bites off the sentence. She looks stricken:

HARMONY

Who what..?

(beat)

Who what, Harry..?

He retreats to the BATHROOM.

HARRY

Look, just... forget I said anything. Get some rest. Tomorrow we'll start working on your case.

HARMONY

So... you can do it? You're not too jammed up with other clients?

HARRY

Let me worry about that.

He shuts the bathroom door, blanches -- what the hell is he doing? He's never gonna get away with this. Calls:

HARRY

Tomorrow afternoon good?

HARMONY (THROUGH DOOR)

Yeah, that's perfect. I'm borrowing some sweats and a T-shirt.

He unzips. Starts to pee. Rubs tired eyes... Reaches over, opens the medicine cabinet. Fumbles for aspirin --

The mirror nicely captures THE CORPSE IN THE TUB.

It swings into view. Sitting there mute, behind him. It's the girl from the lake. RIGHT behind him.

Flower dress. Hair plastered across her fish-white face.

Harry, OBLIVIOUS -- tugging at the childproof cap... Shakes out three pills. Pops them. Looks in the mirror--

SPITS them the length of the room. He SPINS, staggers on one foot. A burlesque arc of urine, preceding him.

Stands, blank. Utterly FROZEN. The poster boy for cognitive dissonance (yes, they have that.)

Realizes, belatedly, that he's peeing ALL OVER THE CORPSE. Stuffs himself away, cinches his pants, as --

HARMONY (THROUGH THE DOOR)

Goodbye. I'm leaving...! Harry..?

Harry says in a small strangled voice:

HARRY

Goodbye.

He can't believe what he's seeing.

HARMONY (THROUGH THE DOOR)

Thanks! This is really great. 'Bye!

THE THING continues to be there, whether the fuck it's believed in or not. Harry fumbles out his phone --

EXT. STREET - WITH GAY PERRY - DRIVING - NIGHT

Perry, phone to his ear, incredulous:

GAY PERRY

Say it again, they gave her BACK??

INTERCUT - HARRY - IN THE BATHROOM

On the edge of panic:

HARRY

She's in my tub, I'm looking at her, for Chrissakes.

GAY PERRY

That's ridiculous. They don't even KNOW you, they couldn't possibly--

HARRY

They couldn't! You're right! And since the body can't be here, this is all a dream, and oh, look, there's Elmo the elf, GOOD MORNING, ELMO! What's in your basket--

GAY PERRY

Shut up. How'd they get in?

HARRY

Don't know. Fire escape, maybe?

GAY PERRY

(takes a deep breath:)

Okay. First things first, we gotta move her somewhere. You got gloves?

HARRY

Excuse me?

GAY PERRY

If it's a frame-up, some asshole's probably calling the cops on you right now. Do this: wrap up the body, a sheet, blanket -- a rug if you got one.

HARRY

Just a second, I'm getting gloves. Any particular kind?

GAY PERRY

Yes, fawn, would you fucking HURRY?

HARRY

Hey, I, uh... I peed on it.

GAY PERRY

I -- excuse me?

HARRY

I... peed. On the body, um, can they...
do I.D. from that..?

GAY PERRY

Say again? You peed --

HARRY

On the corpse, see, my question is--

GAY PERRY

Your question. No, no, me first. WHY IN
PLUPERFECT HELL DID YOU PEE--

HARRY

I didn't INTEND to, it wasn't like I did
it for KICKS!!

(desperate:)

This isn't happening. It's your fault,
you said *this doesn't happen!!*

GAY PERRY

SHUT UP AND LISTEN. First: wrap the
body. Next, you have to find the gun.
Say it with me, "find the gun."

HARRY

Gun, I... I threw it in the lake --

GAY PERRY

Not MY GUN, idiot. If they dropped a
body on you they also planted a gun,
trust me. Move it. I'll be there in
four minutes.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

HARRY comes barreling out of the bathroom. Runs to the
closet, grabs a blanket, as

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT

Perry's Jaguar throws a SMOKING 180, leaves most of its tires on the road behind it. He blows by camera, CUT TO:

A .38 REVOLVER

Underneath a sagging bed, as HARRY utters a triumphant GRUNT. Snakes out an arm, snags the gun, and meanwhile

DOWN IN THE LOBBY

Ding...! HARMONY steps off the elevator. Strides across the lobby. Idle glance at the concierge -- There are TWO COPS leaning on the guy's desk. Speaking tersely.

COP ONE

--- caller specified room 314, some sort of... brawl or something. Violent.

Whoa, she thinks, that's Harry's room. But violent..? Hell, she was just there. Walks slower, eavesdropping --

CONCIERGE

Yes, here we go. 314, Lockhart. Let me give you the key.

At which point, Harmony surprises herself by suddenly blurting out to the cops:

HARMONY

No, no, it's not 314. It's 514. I was just up there, it's AWFUL, all those noises.

COP TWO

Oh. Thank you, Ma'am. Appreciate that.

And on that note, Harmony, utterly perplexed, passes through the revolving ENTRANCE DOOR, out into the chill.

Grabs her cel phone, she's gotta warn Harry and consequently FAILS TO SEE GAY PERRY as he blurs by, behind her. In through the revolving door --

INT. HALLWAY - THIRD FLOOR

Ding...! The elevator doors open and out comes Perry. Bolts down the hallway toward

HARRY'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Bang-Bang-Bang. Fist pummels the door --

GAY PERRY

It's me, open up!

HARRY admits Perry, then quickly shuts the door. The PHONE is shrilling.

GAY PERRY

Don't answer that.

HARRY

Duh.

Perry, out of breath. Sees a BUNDLE on the bed, points --

GAY PERRY

That it?

HARRY

No, that's the other corpse, from the last guy who stayed here.

GAY PERRY

Fuck off. The gun?

Harry pats his jacket pocket. Crosses to the corpse. They kneel. Harry licks dry lips, swallows, says:

HARRY

Perry. The sons of bitches made us. Made *me*. In town for two days, they know who I am, where to find me. That's --

GAY PERRY

-- It's impossible. Yeah, I know.
(looks up)
Fire escape.

EXT. HOTEL - FIRE ESCAPE - STAR-FILLED SKY OVERHEAD

The BUNDLE is slung between them. Propped on their respective shoulders, sagging in the middle. It's slow going; a step-by-step balancing act.

HARRY

I forgot to tell you, Harmony's alive and she thinks her sister was murdered.

GAY PERRY

Come again?

HARRY

Never mind. Ouch--!

He bashes his hand on the railing. Swears.

He looks at Perry. Perry looks at him. They stop. BOTH peer over the railing... Three stories, straight down.

EXT. PARKING LOT - GROUND LEVEL

A FLYING CORPSE hurtles into frame.

SLAMS down with a sick crunch. Camera pans up... Here come HARRY & PERRY, scrambling down the stairs.

PARKING LOT - SAME

Keeping to the shadows, they lug the bundle toward Perry's CAR, over in a dark corner. Harry, straining:

HARRY

So these dudes tonight, they see two assholes out of nowhere, they think --

GAY PERRY

They think we must know something, sure. They panic. The body's evidence, they gotta dispose of it--

HARRY

Yeah, in my bathtub, fuck this. I want real life. You said real life.

GAY PERRY

It is. See, real-life people aren't logical, man. They get freaked out, improvise --

HARRY

Aw, shut up, you're changing your tune every five minutes.

Harry slips, DROPS his end. It thuds to the ground. He swears. Bends downs... FREEZES:

Headlights. Car approaching. FLASHING LIGHTS. Cops.

Oh shit, oh shit, oh shit. They frantically drag the corpse toward a chain-link FENCE. Huffing, grunting...

Pick a spot along the fence. Heft the bundle, brace themselves and HEAVE --

ROLL HER OVER THE TOP

She flops into the bushes, CRASH, rustle-rustle...!

Harry follows with the GUN, chucks it, as THE POLICE CAR swings into sight and without missing a beat Perry says:

GAY PERRY

Quick. Kiss me.

HARRY

What?

Perry plasters his mouth to Harry's. Harry, sputtering in protest -- Perry locks him in an embrace.

THE POLICE CAR cruises past. A cop shines a flashlight --

COP

Check out Doris and Lucinda over here.

His partner shakes his head. The car idles past... Turns the corner... Gone. HARRY flings Perry away, sputtering:

HARRY

Ack--! Aaaagh--! All right! All right, that's it. These lessons suck, I quit, *this is not being a detective*. Corpses floating in lakes, people kissing people, this is... this is WRONG.

Perry clamps a hand over Harry's mouth, SILENCES him. Out of the dark, A VOICE:

VOICE (O.S.)

Somebody want to fill me in?

The two men SPIN ROUND, startled --

HARMONY stands ten feet away. Defiant. Without missing a beat, Harry turns, whispers to Perry:

HARRY

She thinks I'm a detective, go along with it, don't fuck me.

HARMONY

Harry, did you know the cops are looking for you?

HARRY

(startled)

They are..?

He jogs over, takes her aside.

HARMONY

I sent them to the wrong room, I didn't know what else to do --

HARRY

You did fine. See, Perry and I, we're running a whatchamacallit, a... you know, the old... game... bring 'em in, push 'em out...

HARMONY

What are you talking about? What's happening, and why were you and Perry nacking on each other?

Harry smiles. Clears his throat, takes a deep breath --

CUT TO: EXT. SANTA MONICA BLVD. - NIGHT

PERRY'S Jaguar zips along as we HEAR:

HARRY (V.O.)

I sent her home, believing a) we'd meet tomorrow to go over her case; and b) I wasn't actually gay. Do not ask me how I did this. Then Perry says we gotta move the body again. Four a.m., it's in the trunk, we're cruising down Santa Monica, past the cool-looking police station with the palm trees and -- aw, shit.

(beat)

Listen to what I'm doing, I'm saying it, meanwhile it's on the screen, I hate it when the narrator does that... "I entered the building and proceeded to Bob's office," you're like, I KNOW, asshole, I'm watching the fucking movie. Sorry.

INT. CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

Harry says:

HARRY

Why couldn't we just leave it there?

GAY PERRY

Think, dummy. A 911 call, your room number, then there's a corpse outside your hotel? Bad idea.

(beat)

Speaking of which, what's this shit, you taking on an actual case?

(MORE)

GAY PERRY (cont'd)
Of all the dipshit things to do. Killed
herself, by the way.

HARRY
Huh?

GAY PERRY
Killed herself. I just solved your case
for you.

HARRY
Harmony's convinced that--

GAY PERRY
Fuck Harmony. Little Sis punched her own
ticket. Period. Here, this looks good,
up ahead. Time to lose the luggage.

He rolls to a stop under a big shadowy TREE.

CUT TO: A MEATY-SOUNDING THUD--!

As the BUNDLED CORPSE hits the lawn of a Beverly Hills
home. HARRY bends over it, face a misery mask:

HARRY
I'm sorry, sweetheart, you deserved
better.

Wind picking up, the trees rattling, he runs...

CUT TO BLACK. A Pause... then SUPER:

DAY THREE - THE LITTLE SISTER

EXT. HARRY'S HOTEL - DUSK

Through the window we see HARRY asleep. The NEON LIGHTS
outside his window sputter... Come to LIFE.

CLOSE ON HARRY -- his eyes pop open. CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - SAME

The elevator disgorges Harry, unshaven, bleary-eyed. He
passes a PLUMP WOMAN with a collection bucket.

PLUMP WOMAN
Rejoice in the Miracle, the Lord is
risen.

HARRY
It's more of a miracle that I arose.

INT. HOTEL BAR - SAME

HARRY and HARMONY, seated at a window table. Harry's trying to look official with a notepad and pen.

HARRY

Okay, so -- you said you have a line on why Jenna came to L.A. Tell me. I'm taking notes, so be as thorough as you can.

Harmony sips her coffee. Speaks quietly, intently.

HARMONY

I never told you just how... awful he treated her. My Dad, I'm talking about.
(eyes vague, distant)

I remember, I only lied to her one time... Papa was making her cry, saying shit, and afterward I bent down, real close and I whispered in her ear.

(beat)

I said, 'baby, the man living here is not your father.'

HARRY

You told your sister she was adopted?

HARMONY

(shakes her head)

I went one better. I said her real father was an actor in the movie that came through town. The Gossamer thing. I said, 'Someday, baby, you'll go to Hollywood, and meet your famous real Daddy.'

(beat)

Harry, I think she believed me. I think she came out here looking.

HARRY

You sound pretty sure.

HARMONY

I read her suicide note. Even with a gun to her head, she mentions "Daddy".

Harry nods. Glances down at his own extensive notes:



HARRY

Got it. I'm on the case.
(scribbles on a napkin)
And here's my card.

He presents it with a flourish: *THE AMAZING HAROLD*.

HARRY

It's a magic card, by the way. Be careful.

HARMONY

Oh, Wow. Any training required?

HARRY

Nope. Just say abra-cadabra.

HARMONY

What happened, did someone sue you?

HARRY

Excuse me?

HARMONY

It used to be "Alakazam." When you cut me in half. And not to be picky, but you were Harold the Great.

There eyes meet. He shrugs, smiles.

HARRY

I used to be great, now I'm amazing.
Live with it.

His CEL rings, he answers:

HARRY

Hi, there was nothing in the papers. I'm busy right now with Harmony's case.

GAY PERRY (O.S.)

Case, what case? Leave her alone. News on channel 9, just starting. Call me after.

Click-! Hangs up. Harry jumps up, heads to the BAR --
TV bolted to the wall. On screen, a striking NEWSWOMAN:

NEWS WOMAN (ON TV)

... a kidnapping gone wrong. It is unclear why his daughter was subsequently murdered, or even where;

(MORE)

NEWS WOMAN (ON TV) (cont'd)
for she was almost certainly killed and
then moved, police sources say. Veronica
Dexter's abductors remain at large.

(beat)

Harlan Dexter, 53 year-old actor-turned-
entrepreneur, runs the prestigious Dexter
Clinic downtown, along with a series of
rehab centers. His wife died last
spring, prompting Veronica's return to
the U.S. -- and a father-daughter
reconciliation, following years of
estrangement. Veronica Dexter; 25 years
old yesterday. More later. Paul?

ANCHOR (ON TV)

Thanks, Mina. Sad. Brought together...
only to lose each other again. Very much
like the cast of "Giant Steps"; coming
up, a report on the hot new show that --

On Harry's speechless reaction we cut to:

EXT. HARRY'S HOTEL - WITH HARRY AND PERRY - DUSK

Brisk, windy. They walk side by side. Harry takes out
gum, offers a piece to Perry.

HARRY

Ronnie Dexter? Are they, like, triple-
sure..? 'Cause she sorta looked like Mr.
Potato-Head to me.

GAY PERRY

I.D. was positive. Scars, dental
records.

HARRY

Talk to your police guy?

GAY PERRY

Yeah. Not much there. Lab test came
back, no sign of rape.

(frowns)

Boils down to this: at 4:30 yesterday
afternoon, Ronnie Dexter left home to
meet some dude at the airport, old
boyfriend. Off she went --

HARRY

And that's the last anyone saw of her?

GAY PERRY

With a symmetrical ungooshed head, yeah.

HARRY
Police ever find the car?

GAY PERRY
Uh, no, genius, that was us, remember?

HARRY
Oh. Yeah, right.

Harry looks pale. Perry fixes him with a steady gaze:

GAY PERRY
It was someone at that party, Harry...
That's how they recognized you.

HARRY
The killers were... at Dexter's?

GAY PERRY
(nods)
This is getting way too scary, man. You
gotta bail. Catch a flight out.

HARRY
But my screen test is Tuesday.

GAY PERRY
Doesn't matter. You won't get the part.

HARRY
Fuck off.

GAY PERRY
Listen to what I'm saying.

HARRY
I know it's a longshot --

GAY PERRY
Harry, you're not getting the part.

HARRY
So I'm not Brando, you think I don't know
that? If there's even a *chance* --

GAY PERRY
There isn't, YOU'RE NOT GETTING THE PART,
YOU NEVER WERE.

It bursts out of him. Harry stops, mid-sentence.

GAY PERRY

Nick Cage wants too much money. Get it now? Dabney, he unearths a "discovery." New kid, works for cheap. He flies you out, high profile. The parties, detective lessons, ALL of it.

(beat)

He's using you to shave a million dollars off Cage's price.

And there it is. Out on the table.

GAY PERRY

Sorry, chief, but there it is. I'm done lying to you. So. That's it. If you're gonna take a swing at me, do it no--

The PUNCH snaps his head around. He SWEARS, as Harry launches another left -- ducks this one easily. Spins Harry, SLAMS him against a mailbox. Twists cruelly.

HARRY

You son of a bi--aaaGGHHH.

Perry lets go. Steps back, still wary. Harry, gasping.

GAY PERRY

And don't bother keeping your date with Harmony. She wasn't happy to hear that you weren't a detective. That you lied.

Another shock. Harry, overwhelmed.

HARRY

You... you TOLD her..??

(almost in tears)

Man, I... I thought you were, like, my friend! I was in trouble, you were right there --

GAY PERRY

Protecting my employer, yes,
(off Harry's look)

DABNEY. My employer? He pays me to insulate him from corpses.

Harry absorbs this like a physical blow.

GAY PERRY

I'm not a nice man, Harry.

(beat)

Go home. Before something bad happens.

Perry turns. Heads for his car.

HARRY

Are you... are you THREATENING me..?

Pause. Perry blinks, confused --

GAY PERRY

No. NO, you idiot. I'm saying the
BADGUYS might try to harm you.

HARRY

Oh. Oh, okay. Right.

Perry gets in his car. Keys the ignition.

GAY PERRY

Merry Christmas. Sorry about fucking you
over.

HARRY

No problem. Merry Christmas. Don't quit
your gay job.

The car rounds a corner. Disappears from sight.

Harry sighs. Runs a hand through his hair. Headache.
Temples, throbbing. Grabs his cell, punches buttons.

Ring..! Click-!

HARMONY (O.S.)

Hi, I'm unavailable to take your call,
but if you leave a mes--

He hangs up. Inhabits the lengthening twilight. Nowhere
to go. Spits. Scans the IVY alongside the hotel...

FLASH: *He and Perry, tossing the .38 over the fence --*

Harry makes a decision. CUT TO:

INT. RAMON'S HOLLYWOOD LIQUOR - NIGHT

Harry appears at the door, trailed by a homeless man --

HOMELESS MAN

Buddy, got a cigarette..?

HARRY

Not today, pal.

The man grips his arm -- Harry shrugs him off, hard.

HOMELESS MAN

Rat bastard, son of a bitch --

Harry keeps moving. Into the store. Empty. Reaches up to his KNIT CAP, the one he had in Big Bear --

Pulls it down into a SKI MASK.

Moves to the register; no one there either. He palms the .38 revolver. Rings a tiny BELL.

VOICE IN BACK (O.S.)

Just a minute! Right out!

Harry waits, impatiently. Drumming his fingers. Ski mask, itching. He leans over the counter, reaches... Awkwardly swats at the register button.

HARRY

Hey, can I get some help here?

VOICE IN BACK (O.S.)

Coming! Another second!

Harry ducks beneath the counter. Pops up behind the register. Punches buttons. Nothing. Again -- nothing.

Last try -- Bingo. The drawer slides open. Reveals maybe \$200 in worn bills. 20 in change. He stares...

VOICE IN BACK (O.S.)

Be right there!

Presses a hand to his head. Shoulders start to slump...

He shuts the drawer. Cash untouched. Tugs off his mask. Eyes dull, glazed. Ducks beneath the counter again.

A HISPANIC MAN appears -- Sees Harry standing politely.

MAN

Can I help you?

HARRY

... Marlboro Reds, box.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD BLVD - NIGHT

Harry exits. Sees the angry BUM. Tosses him the smokes.

HARRY

Choke on 'em.

Crosses the street. Doesn't look back.

INT. LAX - 8:30 P.M. - TERMINAL FOUR

The main concourse. An amplified VOICE intones:

VOICE (O.S.)

At this time, we'd like to begin pre-boarding for flight 12, service from Los Angeles to New York, at Gate 42.

HARRY appears. Takes out his ticket. Resigned, tired...

MEMORY FLASH: HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM - NIGHT - CIRCA 1987

A deserted field, behind the high school. Foreground: YOUNG HARRY, 18 -- facing 16 year-old HARMONY.

HARMONY

Gotta catch my bus. If I don't go now, I never will. I'm gonna miss you...

She hugs him. He gazes past her at the stadium CLOCK: now or never. Presses his mouth to hers-- she recoils.

HARMONY

No... Harry, you mean so much to me.
It... It's different with you. If we do it, it'll be magic. Worth waiting for.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY -- Harry steps aside for a young child. Mutters politely, examines his ticket -- STOPS.

Looks up, frowning. Is it..? Nah. Couldn't be, yet --

IT IS, IT'S FLICKA.

Walking the concourse. Pulling her stewardess cart.

WITH FLICKA

She glances up, sees HARRY hustling toward her. Won't even look at him. Eyes front, says:

FLICKA

She doesn't want to talk to you.

HARRY

I know that. Maybe... maybe I don't want to talk to her. Ever think of that? Maybe it's you I'm interested in.

FLICKA

Is that true?

HARRY

Well, no. Listen, she has a cel phone, right? She must.

FLICKA

Forget it. This is between you two --

HARRY

HERE. Look, a ticket, see? Baby, I'm going. I just want to say something, anything to her... I... I'm begging you.

Pause... She heaves a sigh:

FLICKA

I'm gonna regret this.

Unzips a pouch in her carry-on. Pulls out a telephone-slash-address book, flips through it:

FLICKA

Let's see... Where is it, not here... that's funny... Oh. Of course.

HARRY

What? What's funny?

FLICKA

Nothing, I forgot it's listed under her stage name.

HARRY

No kidding? What's her stage name..?

FLICKA

... Ames. Allison Ames.

HARRY

Huh... Look, I really appreciate this, I promise I --

He stops dead. Mid-sentence.

HARRY
Say that name again?

FLICKA
Ames... A-M-E--

HARRY
Allison Ames, that's... that's Harmony's
stage name??

FLICKA
I think I just said that.

HARRY
And is that the name on her credit cards?

FLICKA
How should I know? Christ!

INT. CAR - DRIVING - NIGHT

HARRY is gunning it, fifty-plus. Phone to his ear:

GAY PERRY (O.S.)
You have reached the offices of Sentron,
Inc. Please leave a message.

HARRY
Newsflash, Perry. Your client, Ames, it
was the little sister, repeat, the little
sister. That's where Harmony's two grand
went, it's in your bank, you overpriced
bastard, HER KID SISTER HIRED YOU. Your
case and my case, man, now hear this,
it's the *same fucking case!*

EXT. HARMONY'S GUEST HOUSE - NIGHT

Harry leaps from the car. Runs to the guest house.
Pounds on the door. Pause. Pounds again.

HARRY
Harmony, it's me. Something's happened,
it's about your sister.
(pounds)
I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU.

What happens then happens quickly: Harmony FLINGS open
the door. Harry extends his hand:

HARRY
Listen, I just found out --

HARMONY
GET OUT OF MY LIFE!!!

She rears back like Nolan Ryan, SLAMS the door--!

Cuts off his finger. Harry grunts. The color drains from his face. Pause... She throws open the door again.

HARMONY
Hey, did I just cut off your fi--?

She stops. Sees him hunched, blood squirting. CUT TO:

A DOCTOR SEWING HIS FINGER BACK ON

ECU of half a forefinger, as a needle draws stitches. To one side, a coffee mug -- red-tinged ice cubes, we're

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - NIGHT

HARRY, on local anesthesia; inventing swear words, M.O.S -- Over this, bleeding into the next scene, we HEAR:

HARMONY (ON TELEPHONE)
You're a genius. A GENIUS. I'm so sorry I bailed, I had to go to work, oh, Harry, I'm going nuts, I can't stop thinking about this.

INT. CAB - WITH HARRY

Harry slouches, hand bandaged. Phone to his ear.

HARMONY (O.S.)
What's Jenna's part in this -- I mean, how'd she know where Ronnie Dexter would be murdered? She sent you and Perry to that exact place. Is that crazy or what?

A pause. Harry mulls it over for a second, blurts:

HARRY
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU CUT OFF MY FINGER.

HARMONY (O.S.)
Oh, Harry, I'm so sorry... How is it?

HARRY
All shot up. Can't feel a thing.
(beat)
Where's Perry? We gotta talk to him.

HARMONY (O.S.)

He's gonna stop by here. I can try the pager again.

HARRY

Won't matter. Pager, phone, they both went swimming. You on catering detail?

HARMONY (O.S.)

Yeah. Party up on Sunset Plaza. Listen, remember you said the killer may have been at Dexter's party? Well, that whole bunch is here tonight.

HARRY

Put me on the list. I'll be right over.

HARMONY (O.S.)

Are you still doped up?

HARRY

Put me on the list. I'll drop by. Maybe I can stir the kettle a bit, you know? Stick out a hat, see who shoots at it.

HARMONY (O.S.)

Maybe you should put the hat in the kettle. Then if they shoot it'll ricochet. Harry, you sound trashed.

HARRY

Gimme the address.

EXT. LOOMING HOLLYWOOD MANSION - NIGHT

The TAXI deposits HARRY in front of a Gothic monstrosity. THROB of music from within. Voices, laughter.

HARRY (V.O.)

A young girl from Indiana comes to L.A. -- Can't hack it, cancels her subscription to Life. Voila -- reality. Case closed.

INT. PARTY PROPER - WITH HARRY - WANDERING

Along the wall, at intervals, WINDOW DISPLAYS. Tastefully naked men, women. Painted. IGNORING the outside world. Not allowed to react to it.

HARRY (V.O.)

Or was it..? Murder; suicide; either way, the girl was dead -- but now it mattered to me, I had to know.

HARRY joins the milling crowd. Wanders outside into the
BACK YARD

A crush of bodies. Dancing, drinking, occasionally falling. VIEW overlooking L.A., a panoply of lights.

HARMONY, IN A SKIMPY SANTA GETUP

Emerges from the house. Spots HARRY, waves. Elbows her way forward -- Fetches up next to him, clutching a bag.

HARMONY

I got it. Just now, my friend Tiff does video dubbing at Fox.

Passes him the bag. He removes a TAPE, scans the label:

HARRY

"Koo-koo For Cocoa Cocks."

HARMONY

Wrong label; it's the Jonny Gossamer movie. If Jenna was hunting her Mystery Dad, this is where she'd start, right?

(beat)

And Harry, get this -- the big stores never heard of it. Four specialty shops had a copy; one apiece. All rented.

HARRY

So?

HARMONY

You don't find that odd? A box office dud from 1980, and on a given night FOUR people take the only available copies?

HARRY

(sighs)

Okay, listen, let's not go crazy with the conspiracy stuff.

HARMONY

Don't patronize me!

HARRY

I'm not, I just --

He breaks off as PRETTY GIRL steps up, indicates HARRY:

PRETTY GIRL

Um, I don't know if this guy's your boyfriend or not, but just so you know, while you were in the bathroom he was totally checking me out.

She strides away smugly. Harry, ready to snap. Looks at Harmony like everything's her fault.

HARRY

That's it. What IS it out here, these... these women...

HARMONY

Please, they're no different fro--

HARRY

Oh, yes they are. These are damaged goods from way back.

(simmering)

Show me a guy, sleeps with 100 women a year. Go back in his childhood? Dollars to doughnuts it's pretty unspectacular.

(beat)

Now. Show me a woman, sleeps with 100 guys a year, check out her childhood and I guarantee you there's something rotten in Denver --

HARMONY

Denmark.

HARRY

There too. Abandonment. Abuse. Then they all come out HERE, it's like someone lifted America by the east coast and shook it, and the normal chicks managed to hang on.

He stops, realizing it's grown very quiet around them. Every woman within ten yards is staring at him.

HARMONY

Okay, everyone who hates Harry here, raise their hand.

Half a dozen shoot skyward. A VOICE rings out:

VOICE

See that? Obedient little bitches, too.

GAY PERRY knows an entrance line when he sees one.

He joins the party. Ducks a flung drink, keeps walking as it hits an old lady. Falls in beside Harry & Harmony:

GAY PERRY

Okay, you got thirty of my fucking seconds. Thrill me.

INT. KITCHEN PANTRY - NIGHT

Harmony waves all of them inside, shuts the door. Moving quickly now. Turns on one of those combo TV/VCR units that run \$150. Hands Harry a sheet of paper --

HARMONY

Cast list.
(turns)
Perry, catch.

She tosses him a VISA card. Issued to Allison Ames.

GAY PERRY

So, who's in this cinematic milestone, anyhow?

HARRY

Michael... Beck? Whoever that is.

GAY PERRY

Ah. He starred in Xanadu.
(off their look:)
Olivia Newton-John, Gene Kelly. What?

Harry jerks a thumb, mouths the word "gay." She nods. Adjusts the TV unit, hits PLAY. Clears her throat:

HARMONY

Now. Perry, indulge me, I know this is, like, a longshot --

Perry isn't even listening, points RIGHT AT THE SCREEN:

GAY PERRY

That's Harlan Dexter.

HARMONY

So don't jump all over us, you never know when someth-- beg pardon?

GAY PERRY

There. That's fucking Harlan Dexter,
he's 25 years younger, look.

She stops, mid-oratory. Blinks. Turns, and sure enough:
There's DEXTER, 27, punching Michael Beck in the gut.

Harry, Gay Perry, Harmony. All staring, slack-jawed.
Harmony hits PAUSE. Harry snatches up the cast list --

ECU LIST: Midway down... **DEPUTY -- Dexter Holcomb**

HARRY

Shit. This... this makes sense. He had
the Gossamer books at his house.

GAY PERRY

Used to be an actor...

Harmony sits bolt upright:

HARMONY

Uh-uh. No way.

(eyes widening)

Harry, the other night -- you remember, I
said our host, he looked familiar?

She takes an involuntary step back, like she saw a ghost.

HARMONY

Oh, God. I remember him, now. 1979, he
was there, I SAW him --

(points to the screen)

I saw him like that. Young.

GAY PERRY

Whoa, slow down -- saw him where?

HARMONY

At our house. In Indiana. He came with
the movie people. I think... I think he
was the one who started Mom on those
books, God, is that true..?

She looks from one to the other, shell-shocked. An
uncomfortable pause. Harry and Perry exchange glances.

HARRY

And your sister has to have seen this, so
what it comes down to...

(frowns)

(MORE)

HARRY (cont'd)

You tell your sister a fairy tale about
her real father...

GAY PERRY

That brings her out here 20 years later,
hunting Harlan Dexter.

Harmony, now, looking even MORE haunted...

INT. PARTY - ENTRY HALL - NIGHT

GAY PERRY is shrugging into his coat.

GAY PERRY

I'm going to Silverlake. I have a
surveillance. Do NOT play detective.
Understand? Two women are dead, this is
not a book, this is not FUN.

HARRY

I know that, you think I'm stupid?

GAY PERRY

You wouldn't know where to feed yourself
if your mouth didn't flap so much.

He walks away. Harry sighs. Unwraps a stick of gum...

Alone again. Except for a MERMAID behind glass. Harry
waves howdy. Gets the required blank stare. Takes the
video bag. Blows it up, makes as if to POP it...

The only thing that moves is her middle finger. Unfurls,
pointing at Harry. The eyes remain blank.

EXT. BACKYARD - SAME

HARRY wanders, zoned-out. Tired. Party, surging nearby.

He's on the outskirts. Sips a stiff drink, it's been a
loooooong day... Bumps someone, starts to apologize --

No need. The guy KEEPS bumping him. Crowding him, as
ANOTHER MAN materializes, falls in alongside, what--?

The bastards have him flanked. Cosby/Culp duo. One's
black, the other white. Tall. Leather jackets.

Harry feels a GUN in his ribs:

LEATHER JACKET #1

Keep walking.

HARRY
(groans, shakes his head))
Perfect... Just perfect...

They lead him around the side of the house. To a pocket of deep shadow... PARTY noise muted, distant.

LEATHER #1
Well, now. Here we all are, Ike, Mike and Mustard.

Even through his burgeoning terror, Harry's confused:

HARRY
... What the hell's that mean..?

Leather #2 looks up, frowning:

LEATHER #2
I gotta go with him on this one, man, that's pretty fucking obscure.

LEATHER #1
Horseshit. I hear it all the time.

LEATHER #2
You do.

LEATHER #1
Yeah, sure.

LEATHER #2
Where, at the 1942 Club meeting?

LEATHER #1
Hey, just 'cause you didn't get in--

Harry tries to act indignant:

HARRY
This is bullshit. Who the f--aaaGGH..!

Leather #2 strikes him with a lead SAP. Harry half-whistles, half screams. Leather #1 leans in:

LEATHER #1
Friend, what you are in here is what we like to call a JAM. Boy, do we like to call it that.

LEATHER #2

You said it. I could call this a jam all night.

LEATHER #1

You wanna know who we are? Real simple. Me? I'm the frying pan, see, and my buddy over here, he's --

LEATHER #2

Mustard. I'm Mustard.

LEATHER #1

-- He's the FIRE, fuck you, Mr. Mustard. NOW. Me and my man, we're puzzled by your behavior lately. Such as --

LEATHER #2

Such as, why is a saavy stand-up cat like yourself consorting with gay men, frolicking in a lake together?

HARRY

You were there..? With the masks, that was you?

The guy grabs Harry's bandaged hand --

LEATHER JACKET

Pal. You don't ask the questions.

Twists, WRENCHES --

HARRY

Aaahhh...! Oh, shit, OH JESUS you tore it off, you tore off my FUCKING FINGER!!

The bandage is now STAINING itself a deep red. Somewhere under it, a detached digit.

LEATHER #1

Now, I bet there are doctors in New York, clear that shit right up.

Leather #2 drives a FIST into Harry's kidney.

LEATHER #2

L.A. don't want you, tough guy.

LEATHER #1

Go home, sport. Don't make your daughter an orphan.

Harry collapses, clutching himself. Retching. Watches their svelte tan loafers, walking away... CUT TO:

INT. CAR - DRIVING - HOLLYWOOD - NIGHT

HARMONY, zipping along in her SUV. HARRY in the backseat. Lying prone, cradling his hand.

HARMONY

Five minutes away, hang in there.
Harry..? Hello..? You with me?

HARRY

I'm here.

HARMONY

Talk to me. Our mascot, back in school -- what the hell was it? You remember?

HARRY

Whitey.

(grimaces)

The white knight. 'Spose it's better than calling him "Knighty," then he'd be "Knighty-Knight," pretty soon the mascot's named "Ta-Ta," or "Toodles," and then you're really --

Harmony interrupts with a startled yelp.

HARMONY

Harry! That's them. 12 o'clock, look!
You said a black guy and a white guy?

A BLUE IMPALA -- directly ahead. Two forms, clearly visible inside. Big.

HARRY

Yeah, yeah, that's them. Get the plate, call the cops.

HARMONY

I will, I will. Lemme find a pen --

HARRY

Whatever, watch the road. Hello..?
(beat)

What are we doing? Are we slowing down?

HARMONY

I was leaning over to get a pen.

HARRY

Harmony, you are not following them.
Please tell me you're not --

HARMONY

I'm taking you to the hospital.

HARRY

Well, I HOPE so.

HARMONY

It's just, they're on the way, is all.

HARRY

DO NOT FOLLOW THEM.

HARMONY

I'm NOT.

(turns around)

You wanna go another way? 'Cause I don't
know about me, but they're headed for the
hospital.

HARRY

Well, speed up.

HARMONY

You just told me to get the plates!

(shakes her head)

Sheesh, beat him up, he gets grouchy.

THE IMPALA makes a sharp turn. Onto a cross street.

HARRY

Straight. We go straight.

HARMONY

I know that.

As she blows through the intersection, she sees the sign:
Silverlake Blvd. Frowns. Takes a second to register...

HARMONY

Holy shit. Perry's stakeout.

HARRY

Excuse me?

HARMONY

Perry's stakeout, he said Silverlake,
didn't he?

HARRY

What's that got to do with anyth--

HARMONY

Oh, my God. It's a setup. The stakeout, they set him up, they're going after Perry!

HARRY

Ho, wait a second. My finger's hanging off, we gotta move on this --

HARMONY

Sure, meanwhile they're murdering Perry.

HARRY

Maybe. It's a STREET. They could go left, right, maybe they're going to the damn movies --

HARMONY

You wanna take that chance? Look, we'll go save Perry, we'll do it really quickly, then we'll go fix your finger.

HARRY

But --

HARMONY

I'll be incredibly fast, I promise, "Hey, Perry, look out," boom, back in the car. Cool? Cool.

She throws the car into a SMOKING U as we CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - SILVERLAKE - NIGHT

Harmony cruises the boulevard, eyes roving. Up ahead, the entrance to a wooded PARK.

HARMONY

Ha! Bingo.

The BLUE IMPALA. Parked at the curb. Empty. Harmony lurches to a stop. Twists around, says:

HARMONY

They're on foot. If I leave the keys, can you drive yourself?

HARRY
 (sighs tiredly)
 Yes. Yes, I can. Go.

Harmony nods. Takes the .38 revolver from Harry's jacket. Stares at it with silent awe. Swallows hard.

HARMONY
 Okay. Here I go.

EXT. PARK ENTRANCE - SAME TIME

Harmony heads into the park.

An afterthought, she loses the Santa hat. Sadly, there's still the costume: not so much deadly as adorable.

INT. SUV - BACK WITH HARRY

In the backseat, he sits up. Fully intends to transfer to the front. Reaches for the door handle.

Scenery, spinning... Deep breath. Tries again... topples to the FLOORBOARDS, unconscious as

THROUGH THE WINDSHIELD

Up ahead, we see a form we recognize:

MR. FRYING PAN crosses from a gas station, sipping coffee. Reaches the parked Impala, phone to his ear:

MR. PAN
 Uh-huh... Anybody around him..?
 Terrific... On my way. Got you a danish.

He clicks off. Gets in the car. Reaches in a pocket -- Extracts a Sig Sauer AUTOMATIC, and meanwhile

EXT. WOODED PARK - WITH HARMONY

HARMONY, crouched low. .38 held loosely at her side. Low MIST, inches off the ground. The lamps have HALOS.

She moves forward at a dead run. In and out through the trees. Eyes roving --

That's when she first notices THE GIRL.

25, give or take. Torn jeans. PINK HAIR. Punk-ish. Harmony ducks behind a tree. Watches the girl stroll out of the park.

Now Harmony sprints uphill to a BRICK WALL.

The one that borders the park. Roughly five feet high. Finds she can stay to this side of it and still see the STREET, where Pink-Haired Girl walks.

Still a block downrange. Harmony looks back at the park. Reacts, startled:

Now there's a strange MAN in the park.

Strolling south, eating peanuts. She fidgets. Peers over the wall again --

THERE HE IS, THERE'S PERRY

Coming out of a LIQUOR STORE two blocks down. Harmony heaves a HUGE sigh of relief...

PERRY, meanwhile, sucks on a beer.

Ambles along, shadowing PINK-HAIRED GIRL; his aforementioned surveillance job. No idea Harmony's near--

Except she's not so near, not anymore. She's 75 yards away. She creeps along the wall. Keeping him in sight.

ANOTHER ANGLE - HEADLIGHTS

A car, nearing the park... She thinks nothing of it. Glances up as it goes by, then promptly turns to STONE --

THE BLUE IMPALA is back in the picture.

Gliding like an Angel of Death. She watches, terrified, as it moves down the block. Closing on Perry.

Harmony starts to run.

HARMONY

PERRY!

One foot in front of the other. One, two. One, two. Feet slapping the ground. Eyes dead ahead. Locked on target.

HARMONY

PERRY!

He doesn't hear her, or doesn't acknowledge. She hits pace. Legs scissoring. It's a solid pace...

She doubles it. Arms pumping. Legs pistoning. FASTER now, faster than before. Lets loose, FLYING...

The man with the peanuts TRIPS her.

She never saw him coming. All of a sudden she's sailing... Hits, wham--! Slides on wet leaves, and now --

MR. FIRE (aka Peanut Man) is ON HER, clamping a hand to her mouth. Bearing her to the ground, got her by the THROAT --

She HEAD-BUTTS him. Everything she's got. He rears backward, HOWLING. Nose flattened.

That's done it. Harmony breaks loose. DIVES, rolls --

Comes up sprinting. Goes airborne..! Leaps atop a trash can. From there to the WALL. Straddles it, up and over--

HARMONY

PERRY, LOOK OUT--!

She tumbles off the wall, flailing. THE GUN goes flying. Strikes the pavement, GOES OFF, Bang--!

A picture window EXPLODES. Collapses.

THAT gets Perry's attention. Two blocks away, he SPINS --

135 SEES HEADLIGHTS -- Sudden and HUGE.

135

What happens next happens quickly.

PERRY DIVES. Onto a parked car. Rolls across the hood, nick of time as the Impala SIDESWIPEs the car, WHAM--! and somehow

A GUN MATERIALIZES in his hand, like a magician's trick and WITHOUT A THOUGHT he sticks it out behind him and while rolling, blows two shots backward at the Impala --

WINGS THE DRIVER

Guy takes it in the shoulder, car goes shrieking past and

PERRY, NOW

Smacks the pavement, HARD. Rolls, comes up --

139 SEES THE IMPALA

139

VEER, crazily. Out of control. FIRES after it, three more shots, starts to run.

Up ahead it strikes the curb, doing fifty --

Blows its tires. CATAPULTS onto the sidewalk. Captures a fire hydrant -- Buries itself in a LIQUOR STORE.

Shelves ERUPT. Wood, BLASTED to splinters. Finally shudders to a halt, as

THE UNFLAPPABLE MR. FRYING PAN tumbles out.

Hits, rolls -- comes up moving. Drawing his pistol. Heads for the door, running full out --

Unfortunately running in full view of the store OWNER, who promptly blows the shit out of him. POW! POW! POW!

Drops him. Guy dies more surprised than anything else.

And it's over, just that quick, and consequently GAY PERRY simply reverses direction -- as the corpse topples he's already loping back the way he came.

Car alarms SINGING their song. A geyser of WATER spouting thirty feet high, and meanwhile

EXT. PARK - ROADSIDE

PINK-HAIRED GIRL, on the run. Terrified.

Gunfire, murder, this wasn't in the libretto. She sees Harmony's SUV. Door open. Keys dangling in plain sight.

Salvation. She jumps in, keys the ignition, goes roaring off. Never bothers to check in back...

Where HARRY, unconscious, inhabits the floorboards.

INT. PARK - SAME TIME

PERRY shoves HARMONY over the brick wall. Follows a second behind, into the PARK.

GAY PERRY

The girl with the pink hair. She ran this way, did you see her?

HARMONY

N... No. And the man, he... got away. I... I couldn't shoot him.

GAY PERRY

It's okay. You did great, you did just fine.

SIRENS, now. Flashing LIGHTS, drawing near. They stagger off. The dark absorbs them. DISSOLVE TO...

HARMONY'S SUV

As HARRY comes slowly awake. Groans. Disoriented. Sits up. Extricates himself from the floorboards. Peers out the window: finds himself in a tidy one-car GARAGE.

TIME CUT: HARRY EXITS THE VEHICLE.

He takes his bearings. Totters toward the side door. Past TRASH, brimming... He stops. Frowns. Backs up.

Focuses on one barrel. Paper, coffee grounds... A BAG. He pulls it free: ALLEN'S VIDEO -- *The Specialist*.

Then another -- *Rocket Video*. Another. Another. Four bags altogether. This is too creepy. He replaces them.

A SOUND. Harry whirls --!

The DOOR's opening. He reacts, darts behind the SUV --

Ms. PINK-HAIR emerges with a collie at her heels. Snags a LEASH from a wall peg. Exits to the street. Gone.

The house is his.

THE STAIRS - WITH HARRY

Harry moves upward, silently. Second floor. Peers into rooms... Christmas TUNES, on the CD player. Droning.

He finds them in the bedroom:

FOUR COPIES of *Jonny Gossamer*. On the nightstand. 20th Century Fox, 1979. Well, I'll be damned, he thinks -- Then FREEZES. Swears under his breath.

THE FRONT DOOR is opening again downstairs. No way. Less than two MINUTES? Whatever the case, she's back --

And SOMEONE ELSE is back. Harry hears a male VOICE:

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

First things first, you gotta get rid of that car. Ditch it.

Harry pokes his head into the hall -- Ducks back, fast. They're on the stairs. Her head appears, she's saying:

PINK HAIR

I'm sorry, I know you said there'd be... consequences, but... I... I saw that man shot to death. I was so scared.

Coming to the bedroom. No time, no time to think -- He drops flat. Scrambles beneath the bed. Peers out:

Sees a set of pressed male SLACKS appear. Then JEANS, sneakers; the girl. She sits on the bed, Harry feels it.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Yes, of course, we should absolutely talk about it.

PINK HAIR

Thanks, thank you so much. It's nothing against your boss, I... I'm grateful...

MALE VOICE

I understand. Believe me. I spoke with him, and you won't have to do anything like this ever again. Swear.

PINK HAIR

You mean it?

MALE VOICE

Yup.

A phhhhtttt--! of sound. Another. An inch away, Harry sees the carpet leap up--! BOTH SHOTS penetrate the bed.

It's all HARRY can do to keep from screaming. He FEELS her topple. She flops to the mattress. Rolls off the bed. Strikes the floor. He recoils --

She's RIGHT THERE, inches away on the carpet.

Back arched spastically. Mouth open.

And even as he registers the bloody wounds, the fact that she's not gonna make it, her HEAD lolls to one side, eyes wide in shock --

SHE SEES HARRY. All of a sudden, sees a strange man under her bed. Maybe five seconds left to her. Says:

PINK HAIR

Who... are you..?

Her eyes, inches from his. The two of them, close as lovers... And Harry panics. Reacts instinctively.

Jams a finger to her lips. CUTS HER OFF.

Withdraws it. Presses it to his own lips. Eyes pleading with her, please, oh, please be quiet...

Her mouth works soundlessly. The light behind her eyes, dimming. She looks to him, afraid, IMPLORING --

He wills her SILENT, that's right, honey, just for the next few seconds, good girl...

Seconds are all she has. She passes them in pain --

And then, obediently silent, she dies.

The lights go out. Her breath escapes. Harry having denied her a single word. This will haunt him for as long as he chooses to live.

He shifts his attention: watches the tailored slacks exit the room. Hears something plunk on the dresser top.

HARRY peeks his head out. Looks to the dresser -- There. Sitting all by its lonesome: A silenced AUTOMATIC.

The son of a bitch left his gun.

Harry breaks cover. Climbs to his feet. Crosses to the dresser. An automaton. Calmly claims the gun.

Checks the safety. Flicks it off. Turns, hearing FOOTSTEPS approach. Grits his teeth. Bides his time --

MR. FIRE DOESN'T SEE HIM at first. Appears in the doorway, putting on gloves. Blanket, over his shoulder.

Then he does see Harry. Guy's a pro, gotta give it to him. A flicker of reaction; that's all.

MR. FIRE

Hey. You still around, tough guy? Got a gun, I see. Damn. You are tough.

Harry DOUBLE TAPS, *ba-bam--!* Puts two in his gut.

FIRE regards him in stunned disbelief. Looks down. Sees red. Harry pauses, adjusting his aim --

Then he just keeps pulling the trigger, burning new holes. SHOT AFTER SHOT. The guy jitters, perforated --

Flops against the stair rail. Overbalances. Legs, yanked up and over -- Plummets. Slams a glass coffee table, explodes it. Bounces once. Hits, dead.

HARRY, THE EXECUTIONER

Watches SMOKE rise from the gun barrel. A song begins: "I Saw Three Ships.."

He kneels beside the dead girl. Grimaces as he wipes the gun and places it in her hand.

HARRY

I'm sorry.

TIME CUT: DOWNSTAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

FIRE's GLOVE, fallen. Harry bends -- Picks it up. Shrugs it onto his good hand.

Staggers into the kitchen. In shock.

DOG barking. Out in the garage. Without thinking, he opens the door, admits the beast. It wiggles with joy.

Harry checks the cupboard. DOG STUFF. Leash, bowl... Medicine, yeah. Takes ointment. Hydrogen Peroxide.

Here's the gross part, UNWRAPS the injured hand... Reaches into the mess. Plucks free his precious FINGER.

Sets it on the table. Crosses to the sink, extends his hand -- DOUSES it with peroxide. He nearly SCREAMS.

BEHIND HIM -- we see the DOG, paws on the table...

Steals the FINGER. Prances off, tail wagging. Harry moves to the table. Stops. What the hell..?

Looks underneath. Looks to the side. Hears an excited little whuff--! from the corner --

HAPPY DOG dangles the finger. Waggles his head, come get me. Harry's in no mood. He makes a grab for the dog --

The animal DODGES. Vanishes around a corner. Pause...

Sticks his head out, peeks back at Harry. Another little whuff--! This is fucking insane --

HARRY'S PHONE RINGS. He jumps. Stabs the talk button --

HARRY

Yeah, what?

GAY PERRY (O.S.)

Where the hell are you?

HARRY

I'm... I'm with the kidnapers, one of them, anyhow, he's... he's dead, I shot him, Harmony's car is parked here --

GAY PERRY (O.S.)

Jesus. Harry, wipe the place clean and get out of there!

HARRY

Hey, man, I... I can't. I WANT to.

GAY PERRY (O.S.)

So DO IT.

HARRY

My... my fingerprint's here, man, the dog's got it.

GAY PERRY (O.S.)

HARRY. No one's gonna dust the fucking dog --

HARRY

No, asshole, he's got the *finger*, the whole thing, with the... the print part, I think he thinks it's a game.

GAY PERRY (O.S.)

Get the finger. Kill the dog. Get out of there.

HARRY

Hang... hang on, I think --

As he watches, the dog raises its muzzle -- CHOMPS, once. Throat convulses. An audible gulp--!

HARRY

I, uh... I think we're safe. Hey, Perry..?

(pause)

(MORE)

HARRY (cont'd)

Perry, I... I shot a guy. I never done that.

He hits the button. Hangs up. Starts to cry. DISSOLVE:

A TV NEWSWOMAN, doing a remote from outside the same house:

NEWSWOMAN

... Have been linked, through items found within this Silverlake home, to the kidnap-murder of socialite Veronica Dexter. Police theorize a possible falling-out between the kidnappers, resulting in at least two deaths and possibly a third tonight, as...

She goes on, we PULL BACK from the TV screen...

INT. HOTEL COFFEE SHOP - HOTEL - NIGHT

A patched-up HARRY sits with HARMONY & GAY PERRY.

GAY PERRY

So. This evening, was it "Jonny Gossamer" enough for you?

HARRY

Tell you the truth? Jonny Gossamer always has a WAY bigger ending. Harmony, you know; there's a part where he gets tortured --

HARMONY

Tortured, sure. Then he breaks free and shoots sixteen guys.

HARRY

Always sixteen, funny thing.

(beat)

So listen. It's... it's over, right? They said the kidnappers were all dead --

HARMONY and PERRY exchange an awkward look:

GAY PERRY

Harry, I'd be lying if I said I didn't still have.... questions.

(off Harry's look:)

Harmony's sister -- if she stumbled on a murder plot, why hire ME to go film it? Why not simply call the police?

HARMONY speaks up:

HARMONY

And I still think the daughter business is wanky. Last summer she says Daddy siphoned off Mom's estate. Sues Daddy. Flies to L.A. to put Daddy behind bars.

HARRY

Has this... thing, this reconciliation--

GAY PERRY

Reconciliation, idiot. Yeah... Everything changes, boom. She withdraws the suit, moves in, suddenly they're inseparable.

HARRY

So, what are you saying, we're gonna, like, probe deeper...?

GAY PERRY

Absolutely not. Isn't that right?

He casts a pointed look at HARMONY -- she scowls. A TEENAGER across the room pipes up:

TEENAGER

Hey, you guys talking about a murder?

Perry looks around, startled.

TEENAGER

You just said you saw that Dexter chick gettin' killed. Someone paid you to film it.

GAY PERRY

No, no, we were just talking.

TEENAGER

Oh, 'cause I heard you say it just a second ago.

HARMONY

Look, pal, we're making a movie here, capisce? *About the murder.*

TEENAGER

Already? Man, that's quick!

Perry shakes his head. Gather his coat, starts to rise --

HARRY
Yeah. Well, it worked.

HARMONY
No one else thinks so.

HARRY
I don't count?

HARMONY
You're new here. Look around, there's younger and better.

HARRY
I don't want younger and better, I want you.
(flinches)
Um, that didn't come out right --

HARMONY
It doesn't matter. Look, I should go --

She turns, slings her bag over her shoulder. Harry looks up at the winter moon. A pause... then:

HARRY
I steal shit.

HARMONY
(blinks)
Come again?

HARRY
That's what I do for a living. I steal audio-visual components.

He regards her with an odd, thoughtful expression.

HARRY
I've never finished a Goddamn thing I started, ever. School, marriage... can't even take off a lousy liquor store, halfway through, boom -- I cut and run.

HARMONY
Like the other night, you're all over me, then you give up --

HARRY
Switched to the homely friend, exactly.
Listen, please don't go yet, this...
(MORE)

HARRY (cont'd)

(beat)

This isn't finished.

They stand, breath pluming in front of them. She sighs:

HARMONY

Does this dump have a bar?

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM

They stumble in, tipsy. He sets his drink down. In the dark, watches Harmony shed her top. Step out of her skirt.

HARMONY, her toned, contoured form...

Then a quick FLASH: DEAD GIRL, wet dress, molded to her.

BACK TO NOW: Harry blinks.

HARRY

I just thought of something.

(looks up)

Ronnie Dexter. I saw her body up close, hell, I carried the damn thing. Both times..? The dress was, like, soaked through, transparent.

HARMONY

Where are you going with this?

HARRY

Perry said this chick was heavy into the born-again bit, but... ah, it's probably nothing, just... well, if she had on underwear, I didn't see any, um, I guess I'm taking the couch--?

HARMONY has dispensed with underwear. Slides into bed.

HARMONY

Yeah, thanks... I mean, you could sleep here, but... it would just be sleeping, if that's gonna frustrate you --

He finishes his drink. Shrugs. Slides in beside her.

He pulls her close. Begins to stroke her hair. She sighs deeply -- lays her head back on his chest.

HARMONY

So long ago. Since I took that midnight bus. Things didn't really... turn out how we hoped. Did they?

HARRY

I can think of worse places to be.

She meets his eye.

HARMONY

Is that so, Whitey..?

Her voice soft, slurred... He rolls his head toward her.

HARRY

You calling me a knight..?

HARMONY

Maybe, yeah, except for the boner; that's not too knightly, I guess --

HARRY

The hell it isn't. Nightly and most mornings.

She giggles. Closes her eyes. They lie there. Outside, rain falls. Neon flashes. Pause -- Harry sits up.

HARRY

Fuck it. I'm not a knight. I'm going nuts here.

He switches on the lamp.

HARMONY

Harry? I'm sorry. If I'm teasing, if... if you're... I mean, I can do... well, SOMETHING, if you're all uncomfo--

HARRY

No. For Chrissakes, no.

He stands. Dry-washes his face with his hands.

HARRY

I don't want you to offer it as... as, like, a COURTESY, I --

She stops him mid-sentence. Slips out of bed -- Materializes before him. Presses a finger to his lips...

Finger, the opening act for her mouth. They kiss. A coin-toss who's more frightened. They pull back...

HARRY

I... wow. I saw fireworks. Did you see fireworks?

HARMONY

No, but I was facing the other direction.
(sad sigh)

Oh, Harry... Once we do this, you'll stop calling me.

HARRY

That's crazy. You're my dream girl, this... this is destiny.

Pause. She regards him searchingly... nods, sighs:

HARMONY

Okay, Harry. Tonight, I'll believe that.

She rolls atop him. Eyes, luminous in the half-dark...

HARMONY

For one night...? I'll believe anything.

They fall together; few years late, a buck or two short.

SAME BED - BREAK OF DAY

Harmony, sprawled. Smiling. Spill of hair across a pillow. Harry beside her, looking suitably worn-out.

CLOSE ON HARRY: Seeming peaceful... His eyes are closed... Suddenly they OPEN. He frowns:

FLASH TO: FOOTBALL FIELD - 1987 - HARRY & HARMONY

Harmony, 16. Saying goodbye to HARRY. The exact same FLASHBACK we viewed previously (page 64) --

HARMONY (AGE 17)

Gotta catch my bus. If I don't go now, I never will. I'm gonna miss you...

But now, the camera ACCELERATES, sort of fast-forwards thru the goodbye... ZIPS past Harmony, veers UPWARD--!

WHAM--! Stops dead on the STADIUM CLOCK.

WITH HARRY, PRESENT DAY -- His eyes snap OPEN. He speaks softly, as much to himself as to her.

HARRY

Uh, Harm..? Way back when, the night you left Indiana -- You, uh... you sure you took the midnight bus..? Not the 8:30?

HARMONY

Hmmm..? Oh. 8:30..? Yeeahhh... Guess you're right. DUH. Seemed later.

By now, though, Harry is frowning furiously --

HARRY

She didn't want me to give her a ride...

FLASH TO: FOOTBALL FIELD - BACK WE GO AGAIN - 1987

YOUNG HARRY gets into his car, watches HARMONY's retreating form, moving off through the tall grass...

Here we go again, as CAMERA overtakes her..! Zips past, makes an ARROW toward a house... lone MAILBOX out front; painted there, a name: CHUTNEY. CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - SAME

Harmony's PURSE comes flying out. Strikes her in the chest as she stands outside the room, in tears.

HARRY

(sticks his head out)

You said you were gonna quote-unquote "wave goodbye" to him. Chook, my best friend, Jesus!!

HARMONY

I just stopped by, I...

HARRY

For three and a half-hours?? You made it with Chook Chutney. Just say it.

HARMONY

I... I'd never see him again, he... he looked so sad...

(scoops up her purse)

Harry, for Chrissake, this was forever ago, I was a different person..!

HARRY

Watch your hand.

She withdraws her fingers -- He SLAMS THE DOOR as hard as he can. CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - HOTEL ENTRANCE - DAWN

HARMONY does the Walk of Shame. Stumbles out in tears, using her rolled-up socks and panties as Kleenex. A TAXI pulls to the curb. She gets in. CUT TO:

FOURTH FLOOR - HARRY AT HIS WINDOW - LOOKING OUT

There she goes. Sorry, sport. He looks haggard.

INT. TAXICAB - WITH HARMONY

HARMONY, brazenly weeping. Fishes in her bag for an actual Kleenex. Stuffs in the panties and socks --

Abruptly, she FREEZES. Breath suspended. Something goes click behind her eyes. CUT TO:

INT. HARRY'S HOTEL ROOM - SAME

The phone RINGS, startling him. He snatches it, rasps:

HARRY

... Yeah...

HARMONY, barely intelligible -- clearly just sobbing:

HARMONY (O.S.)

Wah she waped..?

HARRY

Huh?

HARMONY (O.S.,)

The Dextow Gool. Waped -- Raped. Soweey.

Harry falters, caught off guard -- clears his throat:

HARRY

No. Um... M.E.'s report showed... no indication of... stuff. Rape.

Click..! He stares dumbly at the receiver. Huh?

Slowly sets down the phone. Sighs. Looks at the bed... Stops, squints -- she's left something behind:

It's the BOOK she lifted from Dexter. Must've fallen from her bag. Harry bends down, scans the title --

Straighten Up and Die Right - A Jonny Gossamer Thriller

Cover: LIGHTNING flash. JONNY walks a rainswept city... Harry tosses it aside. Flops full-length onto the BED --

CUT TO BLACK. Pause... then SUPER:

DAY FOUR - THE SIMPLE ART OF MURDER

Next thing HARRY knows, *WHOOMPH--!* He's being SWATTED in the face, repeatedly. GAY PERRY hauls him out of bed --

HARRY

Huh--? But... what did I do--?

GAY PERRY

HARMONY'S IN TROUBLE.

(beat)

Grab a fucking coat and let's go.

FOUNTAIN AVENUE - DRIVING - WITH HARRY AND PERRY

PERRY, in a highly agitated state. Fishes out a pocket recorder, hits Play. Holds it up:

HARMONY (ON TAPE)

Perry, me. Listen, this Ronnie Dexter business stinks. I'm gonna check something -- something Harry said. Call me. If I'm right, you're gonna shit.

He clicks it off.

GAY PERRY

What did you say to her?

HARRY

Back up. I don't get what's happening --

GAY PERRY

What's happening is she solved this thing. I know her. The sly little bitch saw something I missed and she solved the case. Now she's disappeared.

He draws a ragged breath. Pounds the steering wheel.

GAY PERRY

Before she left -- Did you talk about the case? Anything at all, think.

CUT TO: OVERHEAD ANGLE ON CAR

Heading west on Fountain... Pause... Pause... SCREECH-!
It stops. U-turns. Goes hurtling back the other way.

HARRY (V.O.)

I tell him about destiny; he's shaking his head. About seeing fireworks; he doesn't care. I mention the underwear thing -- he has a fucking conniption.

(beat)

And you? How about it, filmgoer? Have you solved "The Case of the... the Dead People In L.A.?" Times Square audiences, please don't shout at the screen. And stop picking that, it'll just get worse.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - NIGHT

Camera CRANES DOWN past trees, past a sign: *DEXTER CLINIC: Rehabilitation Center*. In through a WINDOW...

A FAT WOMAN sits fashioning a clay Santa. She is insane. Smiles without warning. Makes odd darting movements. Behind her, someone CLEARS HIS THROAT. She turns --

Sees HARRY and PERRY standing just inside her door.

HARRY

Good evening, Ma'am. How are you?

WOMAN

They gave away my crickets.

HARRY

Sorry to hear that. Say, listen... have you by any chance seen this woman around?

Holds out a snapshot of HARMONY. She shakes her head, no.

GAY PERRY

(bull by the horns)

Ma'am, I hope you won't take offense when I ask if you're wearing anything at all under your hospital greens. Undergarments. It's important.

She doesn't miss a beat. Steps out of her bottoms --
Stands brazenly nude, holding Santa.

HARRY

That... is one sorry ass... clay Santa.

HALLWAY - SAME

They walk briskly, checking room to room. Harry whispers:

HARRY

That's the clue, isn't it, Ronnie
Dexter was here. She was a
patient.

GAY PERRY

(nods)

Private clinic. Where even nice
girls don't wear undies.

Harry frowns:

HARRY

Yo. How could Ronnie Dexter be a
patient while she's having birthday
parties and dancing and shit?

Perry turns, exasperated. GRABS Harry by the shoulders --
they lock eyes:

GAY PERRY

Harry, think. First she hates her
Dad, then she loves him. Sues him,
then backs down. WHY? I'll tell
you why --

HARRY speaks, then, so softly we can barely hear him:

HARRY

Oh, my God. It's two different
girls.

He looks up at Perry, eyes haunted.

HARRY

He stashed his daughter in here...
while a ringer took her place.

Perry nods. Touches the tip of his nose.

FOOTSTEPS, approaching. Perry grabs Harry.

Yanks him inside a BATHROOM --

THEY ARE SILENT as a whistling ORDERLY passes by outside...

Harry shakes his head.

HARRY

This is nuts. You, of all people --

Perry nods grimly. Leans against the sink.

GAY PERRY

All he needed was a girl who looked enough like her to appear in court and withdraw the complaint.

(soft chuckle)

No one's gonna believe us. They'll say it's right out of a Jonny Gossamer book.

HARRY

Of course it is. The guy who planned the crime READ ALL THE GODDAMN BOOKS. They're in his house. Plus he was in that piece-of-shit movi--

He breaks off, mid-sentence.

HARRY

Oh, my God.

Turns slowly, regards Perry from across the room.

HARRY

Hey, man..? Listen, this girl, this... impostor, um, you thinking what I'm thinking?

Perry shrugs. Frowns.

GAY PERRY

I'm a desperate man, in need of a replacement daughter... Same time, along comes a girl. Harmony's sister, looking for her Daddy.

HARRY

Fresh off the bus. Blonde, petite--

GAY PERRY

I'd say I found my impostor.

(beat)

Fuck it. Let's get out of here.

EXT. CLINIC - NIGHT

They exit by the back door, furtive. Come waltzing up the loading ramp. Crossing the parking lot. Toward the surrounding TREES --

VOICE (O.S.)

Good evening, gentlemen.

A VOICE, behind them. They spin, startled.

Caught like deer in headlights.

AN ORDERLY in hospital whites.

Tall, muscular... Fully armed. Swell.

GAY PERRY

Sir, hi. Um, we're lost --

The man unholsters his REVOLVER.

GUARD

Mr. van Shrike, hello. Aren't you chilly? Come back inside.

GAY PERRY

Actually? I'm from back east, I'm kinda digging the cold --

ORDERLY

Or I can kill you here.

Perry sighs. Damn. It's never easy...

EXT. PARKING LOT

The guard marches them back toward the building. The barrel of the pistol jammed in Perry's back.

GAY PERRY

(jovial)

You know, Harry, I was thinking some more about real life versus fiction.

HARRY

Is that a fact?

GAY PERRY

Like how, in movies, you stick a gun in some schmuck's back, you say, "keep walking," and no sweat, you got a hostage.

HARRY

I do believe I've seen that film.

GAY PERRY

Funny thing is, a real pro insists on five feet of separation, the reason being...

Perry transforms to an urgent BLUR. Spins, lashes out--!
SWIPES THE GUN, pretty as you like.

GAY PERRY

-- The schmuck will take it off you and make you eat it.
(savage grin)
Down the hill. In those trees.
Now.

DARKNESS - SHADOWY BRANCHES OVERHEAD

The GUARD falls to his knees. Perry's got his own pistol, Harry the revolver, and no one's in a particularly good mood.

GAY PERRY

Tell me where Harmony is.

GUARD

Fuck you, Mary.

GAY PERRY

Uh-oh. Pal, you don't get it. This ain't good cop, bad cop. This is Fag and New Yorker, you're in deep trouble.

(sullen silence)

For Chrissake, what are you protecting? It's over. Finis. Dexter's going down.

He begins ticking off items on his fingers.

GAY PERRY

I know about Ronnie's lawsuit, I know Dexter was facing ruin, and killing her wouldn't fix it.

(MORE)

GAY PERRY (cont'd)

(beat)

I know he switched daughters,
which, God help us, actually DID
work, at least until last week --

Harry chimes in:

HARRY

Yeah, what happened, that he had to
kill her?

Perry restrains himself:

GAY PERRY

Harry. You wanna put a sock in it?

HARRY

I'm just asking --

GAY PERRY

You don't ask questions, now it
looks like I'm guessing, we don't
know shit!

HARRY

Right, right. Sorry.

GAY PERRY

And for the record, it was Ronnie's
old boyfriend. Guy flying in from
Paris, remember?

(back to his prisoner)

Am I right?

GUARD

Fuck you.

GAY PERRY

Exactly. Dexter decided to cut and
run. Killed Ronnie, threw a dress
on her. Faked a kidnap, dumped the
body and walked away clean. Except
for one thing.

HARRY

Underpants.

GAY PERRY

One lousy pair of cotton undies.
Pretty funny, huh?

(chuckles)

I'm gonna break your nose now.

He palms the gun, SLAMS it home.

GUARD, nose shattered. Perry cocks the gun:

GAY PERRY

Picture a bullet inside your head,
chief. Right here. Right now.

GUARD

Fuck you...

(spits blood)

And anyway, that's ambiguous.

GAY PERRY

Excuse me? How is that ambiguous?

HARRY

I think he means that when you say,
"picture it inside your head;"
okay, is that, a bullet will BE
inside your head, or is it, picture
it in your head, like, form an
IMAGE, see what I'm saying?

GAY PERRY

Will you shut up?

GUARD

Look. I don't know about a girl.
Seriously.

HARRY

Yeah, yeah -- You know what, the
hell with this guy. Step aside.

Harry, galvanized, comes forward.

Dumps all five slugs from his revolver.

Replaces a SINGLE BULLET in the cylinder -- Spins it.

Steps past Perry. Kneels, says:

HARRY

The girl. Harmony. WHERE IS SHE?

GAY PERRY

What the hell are you doing?

Harry winks at Perry. Levels the gun --

HARRY
 You wanna play hardball? Huh?
 FINE. I can do that. Where. Is.
 THE GIRL??

Pulls the trigger, CLICK--!

Except it doesn't go click.

Just like that. Bang-! He's wearing the guy.
 GUNSHOT, echoing on the breeze...

A frozen moment. PERRY, speechless.
 The corpse topples sideways, clunk.

Harry, eyes wide. Shaking his head.
 No. Can't be. It NEVER goes off the first time...

GAY PERRY
 What did you just do??

HARRY
 No, that... that wasn't supposed to... I
 only put one, one bullet --

GAY PERRY
 You put a LIVE ROUND in that gun?

HARRY
 I never meant to... There was, like, an
 eight per cent chance, I just figured --

GAY PERRY
 Eight per cent.

HARRY
 Well, maybe more...

GAY PERRY
 Eight per ce--WHO THE HELL TAUGHT YOU
 MATH?

Abruptly, Perry's cell phone BEEPS..! STARTLES them. "I
 Will Survive," touch-tone. He kills the ringer, hisses:

GAY PERRY
What?

INTERCUT - GAY PERRY & HARMONY - ON THE PHONE

HARMONY (O.S.)
 Perry, hi. It's me.

GAY PERRY
Where the hell are you?

HARMONY (O.S.)
At home.

GAY PERRY
At... At HOME...?

HARMONY (O.S.)
Just got in. I was out buying a phone.
Are you okay? You don't sound good --

GAY PERRY
What... What about your lead --

HARMONY (O.S.)
Oh, that. Ah, never mind, I had this
crazy idea, straight out of Jonny
Gossamer --

GAY PERRY
It's not crazy. Don't talk, just listen:
call downtown, see if Ronnie Dexter's
body has gone to the mortuary. Find out
if there's a cremation scheduled. Call
me back.

He clicks off. Turns. Sees HARRY sitting, ashen-faced
and trembling. Hugging his knees.

GAY PERRY
Come on. He woulda killed you, he said
so. GET UP. We're through here.

He grabs Harry's arm, yanks him to his feet. Turns,
storms uphill to the parking lot.

HARRY
What about this guy?

GAY PERRY
I'll get the car. You shot him,
you drag him.

EXT. HILLSIDE - MINUTES LATER

Just below the lip of the hill, Harry drops the corpse.
Calls up to Perry:

HARRY

Okay. All set.

(brushes himself off)

So, listen, I got an idea. Let's take this son of a bitch Dexter down.

He crests the hill -- Stops. Draws a sharp breath:

HARLAN DEXTER himself is leaning against a car.

HARRY

-- um, down to... the racetrack,
buy the son of a gun a drink, what
do you say? Um, Perry..?

PERRY, TO HIS LEFT

Hands behind his head, while Dexter's bodyguard AURELIO covers him with a short-barreled shotgun.

Harry shakes his head. Like a kid having a tantrum.

HARRY

No. Not fucking fair..!

DEXTER

Aurelio. Give Mr. van Shrike a pat-down.

Aurelio steps forward, clearly not thrilled. Starts to frisk Perry. The detective pretends delirium. Moans. Grinds his hips. Aurelio YANKS free. Spits.

AURELIO

Fucking maricon, shit.

Perry's CEL PHONE chirps again. He looks a question at Dexter --

DEXTER

Toss it here. Let's see who it is.

Aurelio fishes out Perry's phone, tosses it -- Harry moves without thinking. SNAGS it, hits the button, says:

HARRY

We're in trouble, Dexter's got us--
oooff!

A punch to the sternum, paralyzing -- Aurelio recovers the phone. Puts it to his ear, LISTENS... Smiles.

AURELIO

He just asked a carpet cleaning service to save him.

DEXTER

Sorry, Harry. Good hands, though.

HARRY

... Used to... be a magician...

INT. HARMONY'S KITCHEN - SAME TIME

Harmony, on her newly-bought cell phone --

HARMONY

And, for an additional \$39.99, we'll carpet up to three rooms in... in HALF the time! That's a \$40 value -- Act today!

Listens... Nothing -- She's moving. BOLTS for the door.

INT. DEXTER CLINIC - THERAPY ROOM - NIGHT

AURELIO hums a holiday tune... Applies gel to ELECTRODES. Plops them on Harry's testicles. DEXTER looks on.

HARRY

(playing tough)

The chick in the casket... she ain't even gonna match the ringer you been toting around... Ever think of that, genius--?

GAY PERRY

(tiredly)

Of course he did, Harry. That's why he's having the body cremated.

Dexter nods, impressed. Just then his phone beeps...! He puts it to his ear. Grunts. Hangs up.

DEXTER

Speak of the Devil. Gotta go.

He shrugs into his coat. Waves to Harry and Perry:

DEXTER

Perry, nice to have known you. Um --

HARRY

Harry.

DEXTER

Harry, of course -- Glad to have met you,
hope you won't judge Los Angeles based
solely on your experience tonight.

He exits. Heels, clocking away down the hall. As he
departs, an ORDERLY ENTERS carrying an ominous black BOX.

HARRY

(swallows hard)

Hey, Perry... I, uh... I'm kinda scared
here, man.

GAY PERRY

Aurelio, give the kid a break. Do unto
others, and all that. It's Christmas.

Perry squirms -- and instantly the gun trains on him.
The ORDERLY attaches two trailing WIRES to the black box.

For the record, Aurelio's got another gun; this one a
plastic WATER pistol. Throughout, the sick-o spritzes
Harry every so often. Perry snarls at him:

GAY PERRY

You like this, don't you, you pseudo-
macho shithead? You know, you could zap
this guy in the chest -- sure be
simpler...

(frowns)

Hmmmm. Know what I think? I think you
like lookin' at his works. Is that it--?

Aurelio PISTOL-WHIPS him. Perry grins savagely:

GAY PERRY

Dude, face it. You got it in you, man.

The ORDERLY looks to Aurelio -- Aurelio nods -- He turns
up the rheostat. HARRY SCREAMS. Thrashes.

PERRY, seemingly impassive. A TIC betrays him. He
begins to FLEX the fingers of his hand, over and over...

EXT. LEHRMAN BROS. MORTUARY - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

A TRANSPORT VAN backs toward the mortuary doors. Arrayed
around the van, four DUDES, all natty in DARK SUITS.
Ostensibly mourners -- oh, please. Drug addicts.

MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE STREET - WITH HARMONY

She coasts to the curb. Lights off. Peers out --

As HARLAN DEXTER, NOW, pulls into the mortuary lot. One of the apes approaches --

APE

Mr. Dexter, sir. The coffin's here.

He looks up. RAIN, starting to fall... Nods, says:

DEXTER

Let's burn the bitch.

INT. DEXTER CLINIC - "THERAPY ROOM" - SAME

Aurelio speaks calmly to Harry, GUN never leaving Perry:

AURELIO

Who. Else. Knows...? Who did you tell?

HARRY

No one, I... I swear... I don't even LIVE here....!

Another twist of the dial. HARRY arches backward. The current abates. He sags, semi-conscious. Comes round, gagging, coughing -- And that's it. Gay Perry's had it.

GAY PERRY

ENOUGH. Aurelio, look me in the eyes. Look me in the eyes and say the words, "I have never had a man." Come on, do it.

AURELIO

Fuck you, maricon.

GAY PERRY

Is that a yes...? I didn't hear you.

AURELIO

I will enjoy having you as a patient.

GAY PERRY

You believe this, Harry? *He can't say it.*

AURELIO

Enough. SHUT UP.

GAY PERRY

Why can't you just say it? Huh? If you're not gay, tell me. JUST TELL ME.

AURELIO

I will do nothing you say to do.

GAY PERRY

'Cause you CAN'T. You've done it, you've smoked pork, and you DAMN WELL KNOW IT.

(grins)

Listen to me, you piece of shit, I've seen it from Day One, you WANT me --

PERRY JAMS HIS HAND down the waistband of his slacks.

GAY PERRY

Here it is. You want some of this? Come over here. You want a shot of this??

AURELIO

Shut your Goddamn mouth--!

He springs forward, GUN poised for a savage blow --

Doesn't feel it at first; doesn't realize his kneecap's exploded.

A TONGUE OF FLAME leaps, unbelievably, from between Perry's LEGS.

Aurelio blinks, dumbfounded. Catches on quick --

As THE DERRINGER fires again.

Takes him in the head. Drops him -- Perry's moving before the body hits. Jerks his legs upward. SPINS -- Swivels on his ass, one smooth motion, FIRES--!

Wounds the orderly. Downs him. Then he's up, crossing toward HARRY -- who's staring in comic disbelief. Perry reveals his little 3-shot gun, it emerges from his pants.

GAY PERRY

Homophobes never search there.

HARRY

Thank God you... had a gun in there... For a second, I thought it was... a gay thing, somehow... you guys just DID that.

GAY PERRY

Can you stand? Walk?

HARRY

Neither.

GAY PERRY
 Wrong answer. Up and at 'em,
 chief, I'll help. Come on, you're
 Jonny fucking Gossamer, you're
 electric, baby.

Harry groans. Reaches down... Pulls up his pants.

HARRY
 I take... beatings... and spit them
 out... for breakfast...

GAY PERRY
 Anything you say, chief. Come on.

He heads for the door, Harry's arm slung round him.

EXT. MORTUARY - PARKING LOT - RAIN, A DOWNPOUR

Dexter's SUITS, huddled just inside the building.

Suits Harmony just fine. She approaches the VAN DOOR,
 undetected. Lifts the handle --

INT. VAN - CARGO AREA

In here, the DRUMMING is cacaphanous. Harmony spots the
 COFFIN in back. Wiggles next to it, raises the lid.

Clicks a penlight, directs it down -- a reverent whisper:

HARMONY
 Oh, God... No way, we're right.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

She FLINGS herself over the seats. Brake, off. Snaps
 her belt. Checks the mirror. Keys the IGNITION --

Chaos. Men, POURING out of the doorway. Shouting -- She
 gets rubber and PEELS OUT. CUT TO:

EXT. DEXTER CLINIC - SIDE EXIT - NIGHT

HARRY & PERRY burst through the door, into the DELUGE.
 Struggling forward, Harry's in bad shape...

EXT. HIGHWAY - DRIVING - NIGHT

HARMONY comes flying out of an alley. Slides through a
 hard left, throws a ROOSTERTAIL of water --

INT. SUV - WITH HARMONY

The PHONE RINGS, startles her. Built into the van, a hands free intercom. Rings again. She fumbles for it:

DEXTER (O.S.)

Hello, Harmony! Happy Holidays.

HARMONY

I got your daughter.

DEXTER (O.S.)

Let me guess: you want your friends.

HARMONY

Without a scratch on them.

DEXTER (O.S.)

Or else?

HARMONY

Or else I take your daughter out on the town. Show her off.

DEXTER (O.S.)

I see. Well, you two girls have fun. I'll get back to you shortly.

Click--! He's gone. Suddenly, another ring: HER phone.

HARMONY

(hits the button)

Yeah.

GAY PERRY (O.S.)

It's me.

HARMONY

Oh, my God, how'd you get away?

GAY PERRY (O.S.)

I fired a small-calibre gun I keep next to my balls. Listen, they hid my car. We're on Olive, by the freeway, any way you could --

HARMONY

I'm thirty seconds away. Be where I can see you, be ready to move.

She glances in her mirror, draws a sharp breath -- A BLACK SEDAN, closing fast.

HARMONY

Shit. They're on my tail, gotta go.

She hangs up. Stashes the phone. RAIN, coming in sheets now. Obscuring the road.

Up ahead -- FREEWAY. She checks the mirror. They're closing fast. She tromps the pedal, BLAZES forward...

The SEDAN RAMS HER from behind.

She swears. Fishtails madly. The van crosses the center line. SKIDDING. She snaps around, facing forward --

A PICKUP TRUCK. Bearing down. She screams--! Cuts the wheel. VEERS, last second --

EXT. ROAD - NEARBY

On foot, HARRY & PERRY watch, helpless, as

THE VAN GOES OVER SIDEWAYS.

Smashes down. Slides, 40 miles an hour, out of control --

IMPACT.

Strikes the freeway OVERPASS. Ricochets off, whipsaws..!

COFFIN, EJECTED--!

The ornate crate SAILS... end over end, glistening...

Comes down, wham--! Atop the big GREEN FREEWAY SIGN.

Lodges in the struts. Stuck.

The COFFIN BURSTS OPEN, not all the way --

Enough to admit one trailing HAND.

One dead girl's hand dangling limp over the freeway. Spotlighted. Festooned with Christmas lights.

Got it? Good. Now let's wind the clock back 5 seconds; because another, concurrent result of the crash is --

HARMONY, FLUNG LOOSE--!

Expelled along with the coffin.

MUD-SLOPE - BESIDE FREEWAY

Parting gift: the door CRUNCHES her leg --

Then she's tumbling free. Downslope, head over heels, bouncing, skipping--! Toward the rushing TRAFFIC.

Events now accelerate; the next 5 pages, all in a rush --

Harmony slams to a stop. Breath driven from her lungs...

Above her, THE CASKET looms, backlit. Strangely beautiful. She gapes, wide-eyed...

Pow--! MUD, spattered. She spins, startled --

SOMEONE JUST SHOT AT HER.

There. Up at the fence -- the SEDAN. A shadowy FIGURE... raising his arm...

She acts on instinct; Rolls BENEATH THE OVERPASS --

Almost gets away clean. POW--! A bullet tags her. Oh, shit. CREASES HER, skull-deep.

She flops in the surrounding dark. A rag doll, as, ABOVE --

HARRY AND PERRY

Come charging and/or stumbling. Huffing, wheezing.

They near the OVERPASS. TRAFFIC below, whooosssshing by--!

Harry -- bobbing, weaving. We realize he's been tortured, he's a mess. He slumps. Nearly falls to his knees.

HARRY

HARMONY--!

Harry's shout, full of pent-up rage, frustration --

ANOTHER ANGLE - 20 YARDS UPRANGE

Actually? He might want to tone it down a bit, because

HIS VOICE CARRIES

The GUNMAN, halfway in the car. Stops, looks --

And that, brother, is when it goes all to hell.

The guy reacts: spins, smoothly, GUN coming up...

GAY PERRY
Jesus, get down!!

Events proceed in the following order:

GAY PERRY

Flings himself in front of Harry. One continuous move, gun materializing, *blooming* --

Perfect. Perry takes out the gunman. Blows him down.

Unfortunately, in the last second of his life, the unhelpful badguy fires back...

Also dead on target. Perry's chest registers impact.

Bang-bang, everybody gets hit. Fuck. In three seconds, the entire world changes.

First the GUNMAN goes down, drilled through the neck.

Then PERRY grunts, staggers. *PIERCED*.

Still not done. The slug burns through him, *EXITS...*

Keeps on *GOING* --

HITS HARRY.

Upper thigh. A soft *smack* of sound. He's puzzled at first. Suddenly *SEATED*. Punched by an invisible fist --

SEEN FROM AFAR

Two tiny figures collapse in the rain.
A third plops flat on his ass.

Three stark seconds. Awkward, brutal.

Perry's not getting up.

MEANWHILE, THE SEDAN TAKES OFF

Sweeps out onto the boulevard, slewing rain as

HARRY

Crawls toward Perry, who lies slack and unmoving.
He stares, incredulous. No. Wrong.

HARRY

Perry, GET UP!!

As if in response, the GUN slips from Perry's hand...

PUSH IN ON HARRY -- Staring, dumbstruck.

HARRY

You shit, don't do this to me..!

UNDERNEATH - TUNNEL - WITH HARMONY

In her little world. She lies, semi-conscious...

OVERPASS - BACK WITH HARRY

Something tells him to cast a look DOWNRANGE, he does --

HIS POV: 1/4 MILE AWAY

Oh, shit. THE SEDAN isn't through yet. It's slowing, swinging onto an on-ramp -- Heading BACK this direction.

Back to finish off Harmony.

Harry freaks. Stumbles to his feet, .38 Half out of his pocket. He staggers forward. Flustered. Panicked.

SLIPS...! Legs, whisked out from under. Down he goes.

Hits HARD. Cries out in pain. His thigh, SEARING. Tries to sit up. Groans. Flops in a puddle --

BELOW, IN THE TUNNEL - WITH HARMONY

She lies, a seeming corpse... Only her lips, trembling:

HARMONY

Harold...

(spasm of pain)

Awesome... Might...

She rolls over. As her weight shifts, we see but she does not: She rolls over her CELL PHONE. Groans...

Oblivious to having just placed a call, and meanwhile

OVERPASS - BACK WITH HARRY

A stir of movement. His eyelids flutter, then open --

MUSIC: "I Will Survive."

Sees Perry's PHONE, lying dented. Numbly regards the flashing ID window -- Who the hell..?

HARMONY, it says. Beyond sense or reason, he depresses the button:

HARRY

Harmony..?

He frowns. STATIC at first... Then, scarcely audible...

HARMONY (O.S.)

Harold... use... awesome might...

The words ricochets in his awareness.

HARMONY

Save me from this... hopeless plight...

Resonating. He closes his eyes. Oh, Christ...

In the downpour, he plants his elbows. Levers himself up. Grits his teeth. Gets a knee under him. PUSHES.

Trembling, he stands. Draws himself to his full height. Soaked, bleeding. Hands shaking.

Staggers to the overpass WALL. Head down. Bleary.

LIGHTNING flares--! Fills the sky. Etches HAROLD in sharp relief. He looks out upon the zipping VORTEX. Reaches in his jacket for his .38.

Oh, shit. He's gonna try it from up HERE.

THUNDER rolls. He swipes rain from his eyes. Braces the .38 on the overpass. Draws down on the incoming car...

Takes dead aim... So focused, he almost doesn't hear it.

At first, a purr... then a burgeoning roar... Turn around..! He whirls --

A speeding car. ANOTHER ONE, he's stunned --

HARLAN DEXTER. Right on TOP of him. It's finished, he hasn't a fucking chance.

Harry doesn't think. Simply flings himself UP AND SIDEWAYS, as the car SLAMS THE WALL where his legs were.

Mr. Agility, our boy -- Only one problem: he can't STOP himself. Momentum, too great, simply keeps on rolling --

RIGHT OFF THE EDGE into space, into open AIR, tumbling -- WIND, rushing... CARS, blurring past...

Slams headfirst into the big green FREEWAY SIGN.

Collides with it, arms flailing. Clutching desperately -- DAMMIT. No traction, too WET--! Last chance --

CATCHES HOLD. Got it. Unbelievably, lurches to a stop. He dangles, kicking...

Hanging onto RONNIE DEXTER'S DEAD HAND.

And maybe, for a lunatic second, we think she reached from beyond the grave, that *she's* the one clutching him --

A lover's grip, as she SUSPENDS him above the freeway.

HARRY blinks away rain. Gasping. His .38 REVOLVER stayed up above. On the EDGE, barrel protruding...

He casts about, despairing. Something, *anything*...

The overpass starts to VIBRATE. Remember page 5, the thing that began this mess..? It's okay, I don't either.

In any event, at that moment, a CITY BUS RUMBLES PAST...

ON THE REVOLVER: *it jitters... vibrates... FALLS.*

HARRY moves fast. The GUN whistles by -- out of the dark comes a magic-quick HAND. Rain-slick, minus a finger --

Plucks the weapon from thin air. Impossible.

Reels it in. SPINS it. Acquires the TRIGGER. A magician's calm, a ROBOT'S precision. Teeth gritted, raises his arm --

The next 15 seconds, very strange indeed.

UP ABOVE HIM

DEXTER appears, drawing a weapon. HARRY jerks his head upward. RAIN, sheeting down...

Sees the man. FIRES UPWARD...! Kills him.

Dexter topples over the side. Plummets, STRIKES the coffin, BOUNCES--! The coffin shifts, precarious...

ABRUPTLY DROPS. Plunges 5 feet. Stops, ka-chuk--!

Harry's dangling LEGS, now easy prey, A PANEL TRUCK clips his FOOT, jars him. Still he hangs on --

Clutching the dead girl's hand, grimacing in pain... HE DRAWS DOWN On the speeding sedan. HARMONY, stirring...

HARRY

HARMONY!!

He TRIGGERS A SHOT. BANG. Echoing in the night. BANG. Another. Nothing. Car window down, GUN emerging --

And so, drenched in rain, battered and broken, Harry quits playing and simply slays the motherfucker. Bang.

Driver, killed. Car VEERS. Smacks an abutment, RICOCHETS and meanwhile --

HARRY CAN'T HOLD ON, he loses his grip, plummets...

BUCKLES THE ROOF

Of the sliding SEDAN. Strikes it dead center.

Rolls his head. An inch from his nose: the back window. Frosted with blood inside. Like a malted glass.

Feels the car come to a HALT; watches, oddly detached, as

THE PASSENGER

Gets out, a foot away. Sees HARRY. Goes for his pistol and Harry just flaps the .38 at him --

HARRY

No.

The gun KICKS in his hand. There, he killed that guy. Lost count. A BULLET SPIKES UPWARD through the roof.

Oops...! Forgot one. Harry, annoyed... Jams his muzzle to the rooftop, fires downward. Bang, for Chrissakes. Pest, gone.

What we're watching isn't gory; it's flat-out METHODICAL.

Harry, alone now... sprawled out atop the car. Drenched. Staring at all the pretty colored LIGHTS...

HARRY

There. All done. Finished.

EXT. UNDER THE OVERPASS - WITH HARMONY, WATCHING:

Draws a sharp breath as LIGHTNING flashes and JONNY GOSSAMER appears -- the book cover, the *exact same* image.

She blinks -- and then, of course, it's HARRY, it always was. He flops beside her. Manages a lop-sided smile:

HARRY

You okay?

She nods. Spots a mid-chest RUPTURE in Harry's jacket.

HARMONY

Jesus, Harry, you're hit!

HARRY

(coughs, grins)

You wanna... see something cool..?

Painfully, he reaches into his pocket... The EXACT SPOT the bullet hit -- withdraws a paperback: JONNY GOSSAMER.

HARMONY

(claps her hands)

Way cool! It stopped a bullet!

HARRY

Um... well, not really...

Truth is, bullet went straight through, left a hole like a doughnut. He pokes his FINGER through it -- Grins... BLOOD wells up from his wound. The world gets fuzzy...

Darkness claims him. BLACK SCREEN.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - TWILIGHT

CLOSE ON HARRY: His eyes OPEN -- Rack focus to NEON outside the window, flickering. He blinks, sees Harmony:

HARMONY

Hi. Welcome back.

(holds up one hand)

How many fingers?

HARRY

Huh..? Put that cat down, I'm allergic.

HARMONY

You feeling okay? How are your--?

Indicates his groin area. Harry groans:

HARRY

I can't believe he told you about that.

There's a TAP-TAP at the door, they look up -- GAY PERRY.
Wheelchair bound. He rolls himself over the threshold.

HARRY

Hey-hey! Where's my present, slick?

GAY PERRY

You're not in fucking jail, that's your
Goddamn present. Hello, Harmony.

Suddenly the NARRATION CUTS IN, it's Harry, saying:

HARRY (V.O.)

Yeah, boo-hiss, I know -- Look, I hate it
too. In movies where the studio gets all
paranoid about a downer ending, so the
guy shows up, he's, like, magically
ALIVE, on crutches, I hate that. I mean,
shit, why not bring 'em ALL back..?

As he's speaking, the dead PINK-HAIRED GIRL enters...
Followed by FIRE and FRYING PAN, then a LABRADOR with an
Old Yeller sign around its neck, then ABRAHAM LINCOLN --

HARRY (V.O.)

But the point is, see, this time it
really happened, Perry like, lived. And
yeah, it's a dumb movie thing -- but what
do you want me to do, lie about it?

A NURSE hurriedly shoos everyone out except Perry. Our
trio, alone. HARMONY turns to Perry. Eager, expectant:

HARMONY

You found something out?

GAY PERRY

Yeah. I got the scoop. All of it.
You're, uh, not gonna like it.

Now he's got their full attention. Clears his throat:

GAY PERRY

Dexter didn't murder your sister.

Harmony stares, mouth working... shakes her head:

HARMONY

No... that's crazy, you know it. He was using her to impersonate his daughter --

GAY PERRY

Never happened. Talked to my police guy. The ringer's name was Mia Frye, age 23. Lived in Glendale. When she wasn't playing Ronnie Dexter, she wore make-up and a pink wig.

HARMONY

(uncomprehending)

But... my sister, she... she sent you up to Big Bear, to his cabin...

GAY PERRY

Your sister had become convinced Dexter was her natural father. She hung around, watched him, even met the Frye girl, the impersonator.

(beat)

You see where I'm going with this?

FLASH TO: A MOONLIT VERANDA

The image of Harmony's sister JENNA, her back to us, creeping forward to peer through a WINDOW...

At figures, ENTWINED. Naked. One of them, we see, is PINK-HAIRED girl. For now, the WIG resides on a table.

GAY PERRY (V.O.)

One night, your sister came calling and... saw them. Together. Saw Dexter in bed with his own daughter, remember, that's how it would appear.

JENNA stumbles backward from the window, turns, BOLTS...

HERE AND NOW: Perry takes Harmony's hand:

GAY PERRY

Both fathers. First the old one, now the shiny new one -- it was too much. Seeing it... triggered repressed memories, tore the lid off Pandora's box...

(beat)

She took her own life.

SNOW, SWIRLING, AN INFINITY OF IT

Fields stretch far and away. Flat, unbroken. We see a small clutch of MOURNERS around a grave. SUPER:

FAREWELL, MY LOVELY - EPILOGUE

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - TOWN MED CENTER - SAME

A bed contains a withered OLD MAN. HARRY steps in. Looks down at him, says quietly:

HARRY

She never had a chance, did she, Pops..?

Pause... the old man's eyes narrow.

HARRY

Funny. I thought I might feel sorry for you when I saw all these tubes and shit.

HARMONY'S DAD

(glowering)

Do I know you..?

HARRY

Nah, I doubt it. I'm no one.

HARMONY'S DAD

What do you want?

HARRY

Nothing much. It's just, the zoo was closed and I wanted to see an animal.

HARMONY'S DAD

Son of a..! Who do you think you're talking to? I buried my daughter today.

HARRY

Actually, you lay here with your thumb up your ass, sweetheart. Struggling to stay alive, pass one more meal through your guts.

He leans in close. Face etched in anger:

HARRY

You took away their future.

(beat)

And for that I oughtta kill you.

HARMONY'S DAD
Who are you?? I... I loved my girls --

Harry slaps him. HARD. The old man gasps. Sputters:

HARMONY'S DAD
Fuck... If I could get outta this bed--

HARRY
You can't.

BACKHANDS him. Head, snapped sideways--! Pillow
spritzed with blood. Harry turns on his heel. Walks.

HARMONY'S DAD
... Bastard...! Old man, can't defend
himself... Big tough guy...

At the door, Harry turns, SMILES. Nods.

HARRY
Yeah. Big tough guy.

Exits.

INT./EXT. HOSPITAL LOBBY - TWILIGHT - WITH HARRY

Crossing the lobby, he glimpses a TV in one corner.

HIS POV: A BIG BROWN BEAR tosses a beer and says:

BEAR
Me, I prefer Genaro's... but hey, what do
I know, I suck the heads off fish!

A GIRL catches it. NOT HARMONY. Someone years younger.
Harry smiles ruefully. Exits into the chill twilight.

Outside, she waits -- HARMONY. Harry stops beside her.

HARRY
Helluva sunset.

HARMONY
L.A.'s are nicer. It's the pollution.
Smog causes atmospheric diffusion of
light.
(pause... then:)
Was he awake?

HARRY
Yeah. He was awake.

HARMONY

Did he say anything interesting?

HARRY

No. Nothing.

HARMONY

(nods, chews her lip)

I only wish she could give me a... a
SIGN, just... some way to let me know.

(off Harry's look)

... that she forgives me.

At that moment there is a sputter, a FLICKER..!

All the streetlights come on.

Harmony blinks. Stares. Harry laughs.

He draws a deep breath of crisp winter air. Feels
alive... And young. As the day he was born.

END OF MOVIE

END TITLES DIALOGUE -- OPTIONAL

Over the end crawl, as they stroll into the twilight, past the HIGH SCHOOL, where a PEP RALLY's in progress, we HEAR:

HARRY (V.O.)

You know, New York has pollution. Tons.

HARMONY (V.O.)

It also has New Yorkers. Besides, my agent's in L.A.

HARRY (V.O.)

You have an agent?

HARMONY (V.O.)

I will.

(beat)

I'm gonna be a famous actress. And YOU.
You're gonna be a famous detective.

HARRY (V.O.)

Why can't I be an actor?

HARMONY (V.O.)

Oh, ick--! You're deformed, remember?
Nine fingers. You're gonna have it tough
enough attracting women. Just ask that
chick over there.

HARRY (V.O.)

Who? Pin-headed Martha Stewart?

HARMONY (V.O.)

Uh-uh. On your nine. Bottle-nosed Julia
Roberts.

HARRY (V.O.)

Man, that's reaching...

Harry puts an arm round her as, for the duration of titles --

WE FADE TO BLACK