

DIAGNOSIS MURDER
"The Last Laugh"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - DAY

BRIGGS (O.S.)
Everybody schmoozes at conventions --
that's what you go for.

INT. MARKS OFFICE - DAY

Mark packs his paperwork into his briefcase as Norman paces before him.

MARK
I'm going to this medical convention
to give Elliott Valin an award, And
what you're asking isn't schmoozing,
it's begging.

BRIGGS
So it'll kill you to beg a favor
from your buddy?

MARK
Elliott Valin is not my buddy.

BRIGGS
You roomed with him in med school.
You were best man at his first
wedding.

MARK
That doesn't make me his buddy.

BRIGGS
Than what are you?

MARK
A very close acquaintance. Just like
everyone else in his life.

He slaps shut the briefcase and heads for the door.

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

It's a slow day. Jack and Amanda scrub up. She doesn't look happy.

JACK
So you go to the convention, you
have some laughs, then you host a
dinner for some med school friends
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)

you see once a year. It sounds like fun.

AMANDA

I'd rather be dropped naked into a pit of venomous spiders. But if you're not doing anything, you're welcome to come along.

JACK

Sorry, I've got an old friend of my own to impress. But if you're planning on doing that spider thing anytime soon, let me know.

AMANDA

These conventions used to be fun until Binky and Bunny started this insane competition.

JACK

Binky and Bunny? What are they, doctors or smurfs?

AMANDA

They're sharks. Even in med school, they were always desperately trying to top each other. It was ridiculous.

JACK

I wanted to be head of my class.

AMANDA

Try head of the social register. Binky bought a Ferrari, so Bunny had to show up in a Lamborghini.

(then:)

As if as any Italian junk pile could match the precision engineering of my BMW.

JACK

Nice to see you staying above it all.

AMANDA

And when Bunny joined the yacht club, Binky showed up with a yacht.

(then:)

At least, that's what she called her little toy until she moored it next to my Daddy's 60-footer.

JACK

And I wasted my financial aid on textbooks.

AMANDA

After we graduated, I figured this nonsense was finally finished. But two years ago, the medical convention was in New York, where Binky practices. So she arranged a casual dinner for a few friends. Two hundred of them.

JACK

A nice, intimate gathering.

AMANDA

Last year, it was Houston. Bunny's home turf. She had a little picnic at the AstroDome.

JACK

Tailgate party in the parking lot?

AMANDA

Open-pit barbecue in center field. This year it's my turn.

JACK

Don't tell me you're competing, too.

AMANDA

Hardly.

JACK

Thank God.

AMANDA

Unless you call it competing to out-do them so completely they'll never be able to show their faces west of the Rockies again.

She throws open a curtain, revealing a KELSO, a young, long-haired surf dude, lying on a table, a bandage around his head.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

How are you feeling? Still a little dizzy?

KELSO

Yeah. It's excellent.

(to Jack:)

Ever slam your head into a wood piling at sixty miles per hour?

JACK

Can't say I have.

KELSO

It's excellent.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Briggs chases after Mark.

BRIGGS

Don't you understand? High-profile doctors like Elliott Valin bring in a high-profile clientele.

MARK

Clientele? This is a hospital, not a Beverly Hills boutique.

BRIGGS

And a high-profile clientele brings in high-profile endowments.

That's when the doors in front of them CRASH open and Kelso blasts through, riding a hospital gurney like a surfboard, a bandage trailing from his head. Mark and Norman exchange a look.

MARK

So what's wrong with the clientele we have now?

The doors blast open again and Jack and Amanda run in chasing the gurney. She keeps running as Jack slows.

JACK

(explaining)
Surf's up.

There's a CRASH from the other end of the corridor. Mark and Briggs turn and rush to the source of the noise.

AT THE OTHER END OF THE CORRIDOR

Jack and Amanda help the surf dude back onto the gurney -- lying down this time.

AMANDA

Try that again, I'll use the restraints.

KELSO

Excellent.

Mark and Norman rush up.

BRIGGS

I don't suppose anyone wants to explain this to me.

JACK

Kelso was just demonstrating how he got his head injury.

KELSO
Godzilla blows, Kelso surfs.

BRIGGS
Godzilla?

MARK
Now that's high-profile.

AMANDA
It means there's a typhoon in Japan,
so the surf is high here.
(off their surprise)
I get around.

KELSO
Excellent.

BRIGGS
Get him out of here.

Jack and Amanda wheel the gurney away. Norman looks pleadingly at Mark.

MARK
Okay, I'll talk to Elliott.

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

If Ritz Carlton doesn't own this place they should.

INT. HOSPITALITY SUITE - DAY

An open bar. A buffet. And lots of doctors socializing. DR. ELLIOTT VALIN, 50s, officious and smug, is at the buffet, choosing his food as if he suspected the wrong choice could lead to food poisoning. He glances at the WELL-ENDOWED WOMAN beside him and calmly stares at her breasts. The woman, DR. SCHNITZER, can't help noticing. She glares at him.

DR. SCHNITZER
(icy:)
Can I help you?

DR. VALIN
Sid Loomis?

DR. SCHNITZER
No, Emily Schnitzer. Doctor Emily Schnitzer.

DR. VALIN
I meant your breasts. Sid Loomis did them. I'd recognize the lateral slant anywhere.

She stomps off. Dr. Valin looks after her and shrugs.

DR. VALIN (CONT'D)

Touchy.

Bonnie Valin, a vivacious, perfectly-built woman in her late 30s, wearing a BLUE BLAZER, comes up beside Dr. Valin.

BONNIE

You have a way with women, Elliott.

DR. VALIN

So does her plastic surgeon. You're lucky Sideways Sid didn't do yours.

BONNIE

You'll take any opportunity cut me down, won't you?

That's when Dr. Valin notices Mark Sloan entering the room.

DR. VALIN

Not at all, my dear. Just appreciating my own work.

(regards her breasts:)

They're marvelous. Just like your nose, your chin, your eyes, and let's not forget your--

BONNIE

Oh, let's. I'd like to go through just one day without being reminded that you "made me what I am."

DR. VALIN

But today it's fitting. In a few days, I'll be honored as Surgeon of the Year.

(to Mark, as he approaches:)

Won't I, Mark?

MARK

You've come a long way, Pinky.

Dr. Valin bristles at the word, which is exactly what Mark wanted. Bonnie laughs.

BONNIE

Pinky?

DR. VALIN

Pay no attention to him, dear.

MARK

You mean after all these years of marriage, Pinky never told you how he got his nickname?

BONNIE

Maybe Pinky told his first wife and forgot to tell me. I didn't even know he had a nickname.

DR. VALIN

Because I don't!

MARK

All through medical school, he was so bad at handling a scalpel, the only finger that wasn't bandaged was his pinky.

DR. VALIN

(to Mark:)

How many times do I have to tell you? I pricked my fingers tending my roses. It had nothing to do with my surgical skills.

Mark is loving every second of Dr. Valin's discomfort.

MARK

(to Bonnie:)

Patients would take one look at his fingers and run screaming.

She laughs. So does Mark. Dr. Valin hates this.

DR. VALIN

(to Bonnie:)

I don't see what's so funny.

BONNIE

You never do, Pinky.

DR. VALIN

Is this your way of honoring me in front of my peers?

MARK

Actually, it's my way of buttering you up to consider moving your practice to Community General.

Now it's Dr. Valin's turn to laugh.

DR. VALIN

Community General? I'd rather join my son as a--

(with contempt:)

--"holistic healer," and fob off herbs, incense and magic potions to the uneducated masses.

(MORE)

DR. VALIN (CONT'D)

(motions to Bonnie:)

I'd even take her old job on "Guess That Price" -- and lay across a new car in my Speedo on national television -- before I'd lend my good name to that pathetic excuse for a medical institution.

MARK

Is that a no?

Dr. Valin grabs Mark by the shoulders and gives him a big hug.

DR. VALIN

It's so good to see you, Mark. You always know how to make me laugh.

And on Mark clapping his old friend on the back, we go

ELSEWHERE IN THE ROOM

as Jack comes in, uncharacteristically conservative in a jacket and tie, searching the room for someone, and bumps right into LLOYD FLEMING, 20s, slick plastic surgeon, who is at another buffet table.

LLOYD

Watch where you're going, Jack. I just had this suit pressed.

JACK

Lloyd -- what are you doing here? I thought you hated Elliott Valin.

LLOYD

But I love shrimp, especially when they're free.

He pops a shrimp into his mouth and does a quick appraisal of Jack.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

Nice duds. Take a wrong turn on your way to a funeral?

JACK

I'd love to stay for some fashion tips, but I'm looking for someone.

Lloyd shoots a smile across the room at KIMI MADISON, 20s, perfection in a tight black dress.

LLOYD

Me, too. Stop by the office some time. Maybe I can lipo off a few pounds and improve your chances.

Jack gives him a withering look. Lloyd makes more meaningful eye contact with Kimi while talking to Jack.

JACK

I'm looking for Eve Lurie. Maybe you've seen her around?

LLOYD

Last time I saw her she was ripping your heart out, throwing it on the ground, and spitting on it.

JACK

That was just a phase.

LLOYD

The "Jack Stewart is an Irresponsible Jerk" phase.

JACK

I was not irresponsible. That Bunsen burner was defective. And the new lab was much nicer, anyway.

LLOYD

Amazing they didn't name it after you.

Lloyd walks away. Jack glowers after him then continues his search. We follow Lloyd, who offers his hand, and his complete attention, to Kimi.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

Dr. Lloyd Fleming, plastic surgeon to the stars.

KIMI

Kimi Madison, I'm Dr. Valin's nurse.

LLOYD

Then you've heard of me?

KIMI

Not really.

LLOYD

I've been called the Boticelli of Flesh. And if what they say about me is true, then surely I have just found my Venus.

He kisses her hand. And on her melting, we CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL POOL AREA - DAY

Jack, looking very responsible -- and very out of place -- in his jacket and tie, steps out onto the patio by a kiosk offering towels, sunscreen, and soft drinks. Surveying the

vast array of sizzling, tan young flesh, he spots his prey, EVE, the most beautiful woman in the hotel, in the smallest bikini on prime time. He throws a bill down on the kiosk counter and grabs a few tubes of sunscreen, then makes his way over to the PRETTY YOUNG WOMAN next to her.

JACK

Excuse me, ma'am, are you aware of the surgeon general's warning on exposure to ultra-violet rays?

(hands her a tube)

Courtesy of a responsible member of the medical establishment.

Hearing a familiar voice, Eve looks up from her medical journal and squints up through the sun to see Jack moving away from her to a HANDSOME HUNK.

JACK (CONT'D)

(to the hunk)

And remember, always practice safe tanning. It's the responsible thing to do.

EVE

Jack? Jack Stewart?

Jack turns. He looks at her as if trying to place the face.

JACK

Eve Lurie? Great to see you again.

(then, disapproving)

That's not SPF 4 you're wearing?

EVE

(busted)

The sun felt so good on my shoulders...

JACK

Is that a responsible attitude?

EVE

I guess not.

JACK

Skin protection is no joke, especially as we get older and more responsible.

EVE

You've really changed.

JACK

Have I? I hadn't noticed.

EVE

Why don't you pull up a chaise? We've got years to catch up on.

JACK

I'd love to. But there's a symposium coming up in a few minutes I don't want to miss.

EVE

Wait a minute. You are Jack Stewart, aren't you?

JACK

In the well-protected flesh.

EVE

And you'd rather sit through a panel discussion on "Technological Advances in Proctology" than lie in the sun and sip a margarita?

JACK

Why else come to a convention if not to learn from my fellow healers?

She's stunned. Better yet, she's impressed.

EVE

Give me five minutes to get my clothes on. I'll meet you in the lecture hall.

She gets up, wrapping a towel around herself as she heads for the hotel.

EVE (CONT'D)

Maybe we can grab a bite of dinner after the symposium.

And with that, she's gone. Jack grins. This is going perfectly. DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

Over this glittering shot we hear an ENCHANTING VIOLIN SOLO -- Saint Saen's SONATA NO. 1 IN A MINOR, for instance.

INT. RESTAURANT - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

The VIOLINIST plays intently to about a dozen black-tied guests, who listen with rapt attention as a FRENCH CHEF personally serves each person a pastry. At the far end of the table is Amanda, pleased as can be. BUNNY, a 25-year-old bombshell, leans close to her.

BUNNY

This pastry is to die for. Where did you find this chef?

AMANDA

Paris. I flew him in just for the evening.

Bunny is impressed. No sooner does Bunny lean away, BINKY, a square-jawed, tuxedoed stud, leans close to Amanda.

BINKY

I don't think I've ever heard Saint-Saens played with such emotion and sensitivity.

AMANDA

That's why I begged Vittorio to take an evening off from his world tour to share it with us.

Awed, Binky settles back into his seat. The maitre'd presents Amanda with a bill on a SILVER TRAY.

MAITRED

It has been a pleasure serving you, Ms. Bentley.

Amanda hands him a credit card.

AMANDA

The pleasure was mine, Henri.

He bows politely and leaves. Bunny leans close to Amanda and whispers.

BUNNY

I don't think I've ever been to a more elegant dinner. You've certainly out-done Binky.

AMANDA

It was nothing.

Amanda smiles politely. As soon as Bunny leans away, Binky leans close to Amanda and whispers.

BINKY

High culture and haute cuisine in one evening. You've beat anything Bunny's ever come up with.

AMANDA

An ordinary dinner party like this? You flatter me.

Amanda pats him politely on the hand. HENRI, the maitre'd, obviously disturbed, appears at her side.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

HENRI
I'm afraid so.

He whips out her CREDIT CARD and abruptly snips it in half with a pair of scissors. All heads TURN at the SOUNDS OF THE SNIP. Amanda forces a smile and speaks through her teeth.

AMANDA
Do you take checks?

HENRI
Not yours.

Amanda opens her SLIM PURSE and reaches inside. All she comes up with is TWO CRUMPLED DOLLARS. She clears her throat and tries to summon her voice.

AMANDA
This is so embarrassing.
(laughs:)
It's a silly, really. There seems to be a small misunderstanding over my credit card... which I wouldn't be troubling you with except, as fate would have it, I also seem to be a bit short of cash.

Her friends trade nasty looks at her expense as they dig into their pockets.

INT. RESTAURANT - LOBBY - NIGHT

As Jack and Amanda come in, they are nearly tackled by the rampaging CHEF, then the VIOLINIST, then a STRING OF AMANDA'S GUESTS, and finally Amanda herself slinks out.

JACK
(to Amanda:)
How was dinner?

AMANDA
Unforgettable.

She continues past. Jack and Eve look after her, then he spots something on the floor. He picks it up. It's HALF A CREDIT CARD. He's about to call after Amanda when Eve tugs on his arm. He leads her away from the door.

JACK
Let's go somewhere else.

EVE
Why?

JACK
I make it a habit never to eat at any restaurant I see the chef running from.

EVE

Sounds like a responsible policy to me.

JACK

You don't say?

Jack offers her his arm and leads her out. And we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUNGALOW - MORNING

An elegant, one-story, Brentwood bungalow surrounded by roses. Among the fine flowers, we find a brass plaque reading: DR. ELLIOTT VALIN, PLASTIC SURGEON.

INT. BUNGALOW - OUTER OFFICE - MORNING

Dr. Valin is in his doctor's garb, whistling something in the public domain to himself. He goes to the nurse's station, removes a file from the "in" basket, pauses to enjoy the aroma of some CUT ROSES in a vase, then opens the file as he walks into

INT. VALIN'S OFFICE - MORNING

He closes the door, walks to the WINDOW, and turns on the AIR CONDITIONER. He leaves, but we linger at the window, PUSHING IN on a TINY HOSE.

EXT. BUNGALOW - AT THE WINDOW - MORNING

We follow the hose from the air conditioner, down into the ROSES, where GLOVED HANDS attach it to a GAS CYLINDER. The hand CRANKS the gauge open to FULL BLAST. We hear HISSING, and PAN BACK UP, following the hose, rising past the air conditioner and through the window to see:

BAD GUY'S POV - VALIN AT HIS DESK

He sits down in front of his COMPUTER, opens the file beside the keyboard, and removes a PHOTOGRAPH of a woman in her forties.

DR. VALIN

(to himself:)

Good-morning, Mrs. Bane. Aren't you an ugly puss. What shall we do about it?

BACK TO SCENE

He sticks her photograph into a SCANNER, which operates a lot like a xerox machine, only instead of spitting out a paper copy, it RECREATES HER PICTURE on his COMPUTER SCREEN. WE SEE she's a plain looking woman in her late 40s, visible from the waist up.

DR. VALIN (CONT'D)
Sharpening the cheek bones would add
some character.

He puts his CURSOR on her cheekbones, clicks his MOUSE, and drags the CURSOR a tiny bit -- voila, her cheek bones expand just a bit, following the cursor. He smiles and surprises himself with a giggle, then puts the cursor on her NOSE.

DR. VALIN (CONT'D)
So would a well-defined, dignified
nose.

He clicks his mouse, and drags the CURSOR across the screen. Her nose follows the cursor, expanding into a CARROT-SHAPE. Dr. Valin lets out a laugh.

EXT. BUNGALOW - MORNING

as the GLOVED HANDS open the valves even more, a LOUDER HISS, and ...

BACK TO SCENE

His laughter grows as he moves his cursor to her lips.

DR. VALIN
And full, luscious lips.

He clicks the mouse. Whammo, her lips INSTANTLY become ridiculously FAT AND PUCKERED. She looks like a fish. Dr. Valin breaks into riotous laughter. He can barely control the mouse, he's laughing so hard. He puts the cursor on her breasts and clicks. ZAP. Her breasts blow up into ENORMOUS BALLOONS. Dr. Valin falls into paroxysms of laughter, guffawing so hard, he's gasping. His guffaws turn into deep, painful coughing. Something is wrong. He goes for the door, but stumbles, his laughter turning to choking. It's as if he's suffocating. He falls face down, suddenly still. Suddenly dead. DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

AMANDAS VOICE
I don't care what your computer says.
It's wrong.

INT. MARKS OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Delores comes in to find Amanda sitting at her desk, talking on the phone. She motions for Amanda to hang up.

AMANDA
My bill is paid every month in full.
(then, to Delores:)
I'll be off in a minute.
(into phone:)
Let me talk to your supervisor.

DELORES

I don't think you have a minute.

AMANDA

(into phone)

What do you mean, write your supervisor a letter explaining the circumstances?

DELORES

You should really get off the phone now.

AMANDA

(to Delores)

In a minute.

(into phone)

The circumstances are that you're an idiot! You'll hear from my lawyer.

She slams down the phone and glares at Delores.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Happy now?

DELORES

I am, but you're not going to be.

And off Delores' enigmatic grin:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Amanda runs out to see a TOW TRUCK starting to pull away with her car. She runs to the truck and pounds on the window. The driver rolls it down.

AMANDA

What are you doing with my car?

DRIVER

It's called a repo. It's what happens when we don't make our car payments.

AMANDA

But I did. Every month.

DRIVER

Then this must be one heck of a practical joke, and we can all have a good laugh at the repo yard. Unless you've got 900 bucks in your lab coat.

AMANDA

Do you take credit cards?

DRIVER

Sure.

She reaches into her pocket and pulls out her credit card. Well, half of it, anyway. She puts the cut-up card back in her pocket.

AMANDA

Never mind.

He drives away just as Jack pulls in.

JACK

Nothing like precision German engineering.

She just glares at him, then turns and storms back into the hospital. Jack watches, concerned.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - DAY

Doctors attend to a half-dozen injured surfers. Mark examines Kelso, who's hands are being bandaged by a nurse.

MARK

Weren't you here yesterday?

KELSO

Godzilla beat me. Bummer.

MARK

And today it was King Kong.

KELSO

Naw, I was stoking in Malibu, ripped into a radical wave and maxed out.

Mark has absolutely no idea what he just said.

MARK

Ever thought about staying out of the water until the strong surf calms down?

KELSO

A pure wave that goes unclaimed is a tragedy.

MARK

So is breaking every bone in your body.

KELSO

Not if you do it ripping your stick through a perfect tube. That would be--

MARK

Excellent.

Kelso gives him the high-sign. Mark walks away, shaking his head, just as Bonnie Valin comes in, scratching her arms.

BONNIE

Mark -- they said I could find you here.

MARK

What's wrong?

Mark leads her to a table just beside Kelso's and motions her to sit down.

BONNIE

I don't know. I was walking on the beach, and suddenly my arms started itching horribly.

Mark carefully examines her arms. She's got a TERRIBLE RASH.

MARK

Do you get out in the sun much?

BONNIE

No, not really. That's why I put on the strongest sunscreen I could find.

KELSO

Killer UVs, babe.

Mark whips the curtain closed between them and Kelso.

MARK

That's your problem, Bonnie.

BONNIE

I've never met that man before in my life.

MARK

I meant the sunscreen. Looks like your fair skin is sensitive to more than just the sun. A shot of cortisone should clear up that rash.

BONNIE

What about him?

She motions towards Kelso.

MARK

He ripped his stick through one tube too many.

BONNIE

Huh?

Mark's about to explain, when we hear a VOICE over the PA:

VOICE
Doctor Sloan, Call on Line two.

MARK
Excuse me a moment, Bonnie.

He goes to a nearby phone.

MARK (CONT'D)
(into phone:)
Mark Sloan.

And as he reacts to some shocking news, then shoots a worried glance at Bonnie. She picks up on it right away -- and suddenly she looks very concerned.

MARK (CONT'D)
We'll be right there, Steve.

He slowly hangs up the phone and, as he turns to an apprehensive Bonnie, we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. BUNGALOW - DAY

Dr. Craig's bungalow is now ringed with police cars and crawling with cops and forensics specialists.

INT. BUNGALOW - DAY

Bonnie is being comforted by ROGER VALIN, 20s, who's pretty torn up himself. An officer is interviewing MRS. BANES, the woman in the photo Valin was working on. Mark and Steve are off to one side.

STEVE
Thanks for bringing her down. I've asked her stepson Roger to take her home -- we can question them both tomorrow.

MARK
(motions to Banes:)
Who's that?

STEVE
Esther Banes, one of Dr. Craig's patients. She found the body when she came in for her consultation.

Steve motions Mark into Craig's office.

STEVE (CONT'D)

I don't know what shocked her more --
finding the body or seeing this.

He turns the monitor so Mark can see the big-lipped, pencil-nosed, balloon-breasted version of her picture on the screen.

MARK

You sure she didn't kill him?

STEVE

Positive. He wasn't murdered in the
heat of anger. This was planned long
in advance. I'll show you.

Steve motions Mark to follow him. And we CUT TO:

EXT. BUNGALOW - DAY

Steve slides into the rose bushes outside Dr. Craig's window
to show Mark the gas cylinder.

STEVE

The killer attached the canister to
the air conditioning system then
pumped the room full of nitrous oxide.

MARK

Laughing gas.

STEVE

He died laughing?

MARK

It almost happened to me once during
a Pink Panther movie.

STEVE

I thought laughing gas was a harmless
anesthetic.

MARK

Nitrous oxide replaces the oxygen in
the bloodstream.

In small doses, it can cause euphoria. In larger doses, it's
lethal. Where did it come from?

Steve starts to carefully wind his way out of the bushes.

STEVE

Dr. Craig's office. I'd ask his nurse
about it, but Kimi Madison didn't
show up for work today. We're looking
for her now.

Coming out of the bushes, Steve pricks himself on a thorn.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Ouch!

(sucks his finger:)

That's the fifth time this morning.

MARK

If you pricked yourself, you can bet the killer did, too.

STEVE

I know he did.

Steve pulls a baggie out of his jacket containing a torn piece of a BLUE BLAZER. Mark studies the swatch of fabric then glances at the street, as Roger leads Bonnie to his car.

STEVE (CONT'D)

Something wrong?

MARK

Bonnie was wearing a blue blazer last night. It's probably just a coincidence.

STEVE

You can ask her about it yourself.

MARK

(surprised:)

What happened to the "please stay out of this, Dad" speech? I was really looking forward to seeing if you could put a new spin on it.

STEVE

You know the medical community far better than I do. More importantly, you know the Valins.

MARK

Since you're asking, maybe I can take some time out of my busy schedule to help -- as a special favor to you. But don't make a habit out of it.

STEVE

Don't worry -- I won't.

And on the Sloans sharing a smile, we CUT TO:

INT. MARKS OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Jack comes in, whistling a happy tune.

JACK

Big guy wants to see me.

DELORES

Ah, that would explain why I've been paging you for half an hour.

JACK

Amanda already here?

DELORES

She's out on personal business.

JACK

Ah, yes, that precision German engineering.

HE STARTS TO GO IN, THEN:

JACK (CONT'D)

Did I mention you're looking particularly lovely today?

DELORES

Thank you. Did I mention you're particularly annoying today?

JACK

Not annoying -- responsible. Responsible driver, responsible tipper, and, I'm told, responsible kisser.

And with that, he breezes into Mark's office.

INT. MARKS OFFICE - DAY

Mark paces pensively as Jack comes in.

JACK

You wanted to see me?

MARK

Yeah, sit down. I guess we all know what happened last night.

Jack, in mid-seat, is taken aback by that bit of news.

JACK

I didn't think she was the type to spread stories.

MARK

You can't keep something this big a secret. Especially in a closed community like the convention.

JACK

(flattered)
I guess you're right.

MARK

That's one reason Steve has asked for my help. That, and the fact I'm close to everyone involved in this tragedy.

JACK

Tragedy? Steve?
(completely lost)
Listen, if Steve was involved with Eve, no one ever told me anything. She never said --

MARK

What are you talking about?

JACK

I don't know. What are you talking about?

MARK

Elliott Valin's murder.

JACK

Elliott Valin was murdered? What a relief.

(then:)

I mean, what can I do to help?

MARK

Just keep your eyes and ears open. Especially if you happen to be in Elliott's hotel room.

Jack turns on his heels and heads for the door. Something occurs to Mark.

MARK (CONT'D)

What did you think I was talking about? And who's Eve?

But Jack is already gone.

EXT. HIGHRISE OFFICE TOWER - DAY

INT. PANGRAZIO'S OFFICE - DAY

Furnished in steel, marble, glass, and anything else that costs lots of money. Ugly modern art hangs on the walls. Directly behind Pangrazio's massive desk is a LARGE PAINTING of a Cream of Broccoli soup can. In front of the painting is HANK PANGRAZIO, 40s, who barks into his speakerphone.

VOICE ON SPEAKERPHONE

It's at 200,000. Go 250?

PANGRAZIO

!

The hubbub of the auction continues over the speaker as the door opens and Amanda limps in on one broken heel.

PANGRAZIO (CONT'D)

Amanda, what brings you here?

VOICE ON SPEAKERPHONE

is bid. Go three?

AMANDA

The bus. Actually, four buses.

PANGRAZIO

Four?

VOICE ON SPEAKERPHONE

Four!

PANGRAZIO

(into speaker)

No! Three!

(to Amanda)

Sorry. I finally have the chance to acquire another Wallengren. "Cream of Asparagus." I've been waiting years for it to come on the market.

Pangrazio shows her the page in the auction catalogue -- the painting is almost identical to the one behind his chair, except that it's a different vegetable.

AMANDA

I'm more of a meat and potatoes type. Let's talk about my money. The money you're supposed to be managing.

PANGRAZIO

We don't have an appointment, do we?

AMANDA

No. We also don't have a credit card, a car, an ATM card, or two coins to rub together.

PANGRAZIO

I can imagine how you must be feeling right now. What a shock to find yourself penniless. But trust me, your money is still there, and it's perfectly safe.

(into speaker)

Three fifty!

(to Amanda)

It's just a small computer error somewhere -- a misplaced digit, a dropped comma. What are you gonna do?

AMANDA

Sue you if I have to.

PANGRAZIO

Don't be ridiculous. By tomorrow at the latest, you'll have all your money -- with penalties, and interest, and letters of apology. So don't panic.

AMANDA

Easy for you to say. You're spending half a million on Cream of Asparagus. I don't have fifty cents for chicken broth.

He pulls out his wallet, hands her a bill.

PANGRAZIO

A small cash advance should tide you over.

(into speaker)

Four hundred thousand!

She looks at the bill -- a five. She's not thrilled.

AMANDA

Thanks so much for your generosity. I really appreciate the --

(very loud)

Five!

VOICE ON SPEAKERPHONE

Five!

PANGRAZIO

No!

And, smiling for the first time all day, Amanda leaves.

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Jack approaches a hotel room door and, looking carefully in all directions, pulls out a thin SCALPEL and works it into the lock. The lock CLICKS and he gently pushes open the door. He slips inside the darkened room just as...

THE ELEVATOR

opens and Eve Lurie comes out, chatting with some DOCTOR-types, and heads down the hall.

EVE

What's interesting about the white blood cells is that they increase in number when subjected to--

That's when there's a surprised CRY, and Jack comes flying out of the hotel room, landing right in front of Eve and her friends. Jack looks up sheepishly.

JACK

Eve -- what a surprise.

An instant later Kimi, clad only in a sheer camisole, jumps out of the room and takes a karate-stance over Jack.

KIMI

Don't move, pervert.

Lloyd Fleming, wearing only his LOUD BOXERS, peeks out of the room behind her.

LLOYD

Jack, Jack, Jack. If you wanted to know how it's done, you could have asked.

Eve glares down at Jack, who looks up imploringly at her.

JACK

I can explain. This isn't what it looks like.

EVE

I thought you'd changed.

LLOYD

(to Jack:)

You've done this before?

She does an about-face and marches away. Jack calls after her.

JACK

Eve! Wait!

Jack starts to get up, but Kimi puts her foot on his chest.

KIMI

What were doing breaking into Dr. Valin's room?

JACK

I could ask you the same question.

KIMI

You could if it was your foot on my chest.

JACK

Good point. I hate to break it to you this way --

LLOYD

Flat on your back and looking stupid.

JACK

-- but Dr. Valin's been murdered. I was hoping to find something in his room that might lead us to his killer.

Kimi abruptly steps away, and overwhelmed with emotion, pushes past Lloyd and rushes back into the room. Lloyd looks after her as Jack gets up.

LLOYD

He's really dead?

(off Jack's nod:)

Does the front desk know, or do you think I have time to charge another bottle of champagne to his bill?

JACK

Did you really hate him that much?

LLOYD

Yep.

JACK

So maybe you hated him enough to kill him?

LLOYD

No, but I hated him enough to spend the night and all morning in his bed with his nurse. You can check it out with room service if you like.

Jack, surprised, motions towards the room.

JACK

That's Kimi Madison, his nurse?

LLOYD

And his mistress. She had a key to the room.

Jack looks shocked. Lloyd lowers his voice and slides close to Jack.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

Say Jack, any idea who they're referring his patients to?

Jack gives him a disgusted look and walks away. Lloyd calls after him.

LLOYD (CONT'D)

I'm only looking out for the welfare of the patients!

EXT. VALIN HOUSE - DAY

If it were a little less pretentious, you'd call it a mansion. Or a palace. It's expensively landscaped with ornamental trees and shrubs, but there are no flowers. Steve's car, parked in front, looks very out of place. So does Steve as he rings the doorbell. He's a little surprised when the door swings open -- it's Mark who's opened it.

MARK

Hello, son. You were a little late,
so we started without you.

He steps out of the way and lets Steve in.

INT. VALIN HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

A temple to money. Mark leads Steve in to where Bonnie sits on a sofa. She rises to meet him.

MARK

Bonnie, this is my son Steve --

STEVE

Detective Sloan, ma'am. I'm afraid I
need to ask you a few questions.

BONNIE

Of course, detective. Your father
and I were just having some iced
tea. Could I interest you?

STEVE

No, thank you. Mrs. Valin, this won't
take long. Now, can you tell me where
you were at the time of the murder.

MARK

She was walking on the beach from
eleven until twelve-thirty, and then
she started itching -- an allergic
reaction to her sunscreen. So she
came in to see me. That's when we
both got the news about Elliott's
death.

Steve looks a little annoyed at the interruption, but pushes on.

STEVE

I guess you've been over this ground
already. Nonetheless, police procedure
requires me to ask Mrs. Valin certain
questions myself.

MARK

Of course. I'll stay out of your
way.

STEVE
(to Bonnie)
Did anyone see you on the beach?

BONNIE
I suppose. It's pretty crowded there
around noon.

STEVE
But no one specific who can testify
that you were there.

MARK
There was that one guy. Tell him
about the tourist.
(to Steve)
He asked Bonnie to snap his picture,
even took one with her once he
realized she was the "Guess That
Price" girl. She doesn't remember
much about him, but --

STEVE
Dad, can I speak to you for a minute?
(to Bonnie)
Excuse us.

BONNIE
No, please excuse me. Your father
said you'd want to see my blue blazer.
I'll go get it.

She leaves. Steve whispers urgently to Mark.

STEVE
What are you doing?

MARK
You asked me to poke around. I'm
poking.

STEVE
And I appreciate your help. But as a
homicide detective, I need to be
able to question the suspects myself.

MARK
Suspects? I've known Bonnie for years.
She didn't kill Elliott.

STEVE
Then give me a chance to prove it.

MARK
Of course. You're right. I'm getting
ahead of myself.

(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)

(then:)

So do you want to start looking for this tourist, or should I?

STEVE

Why don't we wait until she produces the blazer? If the sleeve isn't torn, that goes a long way towards clearing her.

That's when Bonnie appears in the doorway, ashen.

BONNIE

My blue blazer... It's gone.

Mark and Steve exchange a look.

EXT. VALIN HOUSE - DAY

Mark is sitting on a bench in the garden as Steve comes out.

MARK

If you want to give me the "Dad, stay out of it now" speech, you can.

STEVE

I don't need to give you a speech. I know how you must be feeling. She's a friend of yours and --

MARK

As I was going to say, you can give me the speech, but it's not going to do much good. I'm going to do everything I can to find the real killer.

Mark gives Steve a warm smile and walks away. Steve watches him go.

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

INT. CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Mark approaches a door and knocks. A woman's muffled voice answers.

WOMANS VOICE

It's about time you got here. I ordered dinner--

The door opens to reveal Kimi Madison, once again naked except for the towel wrapped around her.

KIMI

--an hour ago.

(MORE)

KIMI (CONT'D)
(then, surprised:)
Dr. Sloan. What are you doing here?

MARK
Just wanted to see how you were
getting along. Hey, nice room.

He steps past her into her room.

KIMI
Now is really not a good time. I was
about to take a shower when--

MARK
The police have asked me to help
them out on this case. I thought
maybe you could answer a few questions
for me.

KIMI
I'd love to. Tomorrow.

MARK
When was the last time you saw the
tank of nitrous oxide?

KIMI
It was in the examination room when
I left last night.

MARK
Did Dr. Valin leave with you?

KIMI
No, he was staying late to meet
someone. He didn't tell me who. Glad
I could help, Dr. Sloan. Have a nice
day.

She goes for the door again. But Mark holds his ground.

MARK
Jack heard something surprising
from Lloyd Fleming this afternoon.

KIMI
Oh yeah, those barking noises Lloyd
makes in bed. It's nothing --
something to do with a deviated
septum.

Something CRASHES in the bathroom. Mark turns toward the
bathroom, but Kimi stops him.

KIMI (CONT'D)

(covering:)

My bra must have slipped off the shower rail.

MARK

That's one heavy bra.

KIMI

I'm one lucky girl. Now if there isn't anything else --

She starts to lead him to the door.

MARK

One question. How long were you and Elliott sleeping together?

There's ANOTHER CRASH in the bathroom, and then the door flies open revealing a furious ROGER VALIN, wearing only a TOWEL AROUND HIS WAIST. He's so shocked, he doesn't even acknowledge Mark's presence.

ROGER

(to Kimi:)

You were sleeping with my father?

KIMI

(to Roger:)

For a few months.

(to Mark:)

At first, it was professional. He just wanted to see me with my clothes off to get a few pointers.

MARK

I bet he got a few big ones. Did Bonnie know about you two?

KIMI

Of course.

ROGER

So everyone knew. But you never bothered to tell me.

KIMI

You never asked.

ROGER

It didn't occur to me!

KIMI

It should have!

ROGER

You're right -- before I slept with you, I should have asked just how many of my family and friends already had. Forgive me for being a gentleman. Forgive me for trusting you. Forgive me for caring.

He marches out, slamming the door shut loudly behind him. There's a moment of silence, then:

MARK

That would have been a very dramatic exit -- if he'd remembered to take his clothes first.

There's a timid knock at the door. And on Mark and Kimi sharing a look, we cut to:

INT. HOTEL BAR - LATER - NIGHT

Mark and Roger (dressed of course) share a table. Roger stares into his drink.

ROGER

I'm sorry about that, Mark. It was such a shock.

MARK

Your father's death, or discovering that Kimi was sleeping with him?

ROGER

Both. I finally find something in common with my father and he's dead.

MARK

You and your father weren't close?

ROGER

Never. The day I was accepted to med school was the first time he ever seemed to notice me.

MARK

You sure got his attention when you dropped out.

ROGER

I really wanted to heal people, but after a semester, I realized how corrupt Western medicine is.

(then:)

Nothing personal.

(then:)

When I went into holistic medicine, he all but disowned me.

MARK

But he didn't. His death makes you a millionaire.

ROGER

I'm going to use my inheritance to start a holistic treatment center in his memory.

MARK

He hated holistic medicine.

ROGER

Ironic, isn't it? If he'd listened to me and used acupuncture for anesthesia instead of nitrous oxide, he'd be alive today.

And on Mark's look, we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. COMMISSARY - DAY

Mark sits at a table, he mind elsewhere, picking at a plate of uneaten food, as Jack joins him. He's wearing a jacket and a loud FLORAL TIE.

JACK

Something the matter with the food?

MARK

I've lost my appetite.

JACK

Then we know the food hasn't changed. Must be something else bugging you.

MARK

It's Elliott's murder. I can't help thinking the answer is right in front of my face -- only I can't see it.

STEVES VOICE

Maybe I can help.

They look up as Steve joins them, setting his CELLULAR PHONE on the table. The first thing he notices is Jack's tie.

STEVE

A witness saw someone wearing a blue blazer going into Dr. Valin's office the night before the murder -- but he couldn't tell us if it was a man or a woman.

MARK

That doesn't help much.

Steve can't stop looking at Jack's tie.

STEVE

That tie looks like it was a placemat
in a former life.

JACK

Is everybody a fashion critic these
days?

STEVE

(to Mark:)

Dr. Valin's attorney says Elliott
was preparing to divorce Bonnie and
amend his will. I don't think it's a
coincidence he died before he could
do it.

(to Jack:)

You didn't buy that did you?

JACK

It was a gift from a very special
friend. Now can you give me a break?

STEVE

She must be furious with you, or you
wouldn't be wearing it.

JACK

Amazing. You must be a detective.

STEVE

Now if only I could bring my
incredible powers of observation to
bear on this case.

Mark suddenly looks up and stares at Jack's tie.

MARK

Your tie!

JACK

Not you, too.

MARK

Why didn't I see it before?

STEVE

How could you miss it?

Jack shoots him a look. Mark grabs Steve's cellular and
punches in a number.

JACK

Who're you calling?

STEVE

The fashion police?

MARK

A florist. I'm going to send a friend
some flowers.

And on Mark's enigmatic smile, we CUT TO:

EXT. VALIN'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Mark's car is parked out front.

MARKS VOICE

I wanted to check up on you, see how
you were feeling.

INT. VALIN HOUSE - DAY

Bonnie and Mark are in the entry hall.

BONNIE

As well as anyone can feel after
losing a loved one. I still can't
believe it.

MARK

You have to allow yourself time to
mourn.

(then, motions to
arm:)

How's your rash?

BONNIE

All gone. I've been a hermit since
Elliott's--

(this is hard:)

--death. I haven't been outside in
days. But it's kind of you to ask.

MARK

You should get out. Doctor's orders.
A little sun might do you some good.

BONNIE

I'll try.

There's a knock at the door. Bonnie goes and answers it. A
FLORAL DELIVERY MAN stands there, holding a HUGE BOUQUET OF
ROSES.

DELIVERYMAN

Flowers for Dr. Valin.

BONNIE

Thank you.

She hesitates a moment, then takes the flowers, closes the
door, and removes the card.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

"Congratulations on receiving your just rewards."

(then:)

I guess it's for the Surgeon of the Year award. Someone must not have heard about Elliott's death.

MARK

Let me find you a vase.

BONNIE

Don't bother. We don't have any.

(off his look:)

I mean, we did. We lost them all in the quake.

MARK

Right.

She sets the roses down on a table and leads Mark to the door, absently scratching her arm.

BONNIE

I appreciate you stopping by. Please drop by any time.

Mark stops and motions to her arm.

MARK

Got an itch?

BONNIE

No.

Mark takes her arm and forces up her sleeve. Bonnie tries to jerk away, but he's got her good.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MARK

Exposing a killer.

He reveals her RASH.

MARK (CONT'D)

You didn't get your rash from sunscreen -- you got it when you were standing in the roses outside your husband's window, pumping his office full of laughing gas.

BONNIE

That's not true.

MARK

You're allergic to roses. That's why there are none on the property, and no vases in the house.

Mark opens the door, revealing Steve and two uniformed officers standing on the porch.

MARK (CONT'D)

I sent you the flowers, but I hoped I was wrong.

BONNIE

You're are, Mark. You're making a terrible mistake.

STEVE

Your mistake was thinking you could get away with it.

(to officers:)

Take her away and read her her rights.

BONNIE

(imploring, to Mark:)

I didn't kill my husband.

She looks back at Mark. The officers gently lead her away. Steve looks after her, then picks up the flower card and reads it.

STEVE

"Congratulations on receiving your just rewards."

(then, smiling:)

Sometimes Dad, you're incredible.

He claps his father on the back. And on Mark's grim look, we
FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

EXT. COURT HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

MARKS VOICE

She told me she was walking on the beach and developed a skin rash.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Right out of Perry Mason. Bonnie and her attorney sit at the defense table. Mark is in the witness stand, being questioned by dapper prosecutor CARTER PRATT, 30s, who keeps casting significant looks at the RAPT JURY. Steve Sloan, Lloyd Fleming, Kimi Madison and Roger Valin are in the audience.

MARK

I asked her if she'd used any sunscreen, and she said she had. I was about to give her a shot of cortisone, when I was informed of Dr. Valin's death.

PRATT

You mean his murder.

Bonnie's attorney, JEFFERSON DUNPHY, 50s, jumps up.

DUNPHY

Objection. The prosecutor is leading the witness.

JUDGE

The fact that Dr. Valin was murdered is not in question. Over-ruled.

The defense attorney sits down, obviously mad. Pratt continues his questioning.

PRATT

You drove Mrs. Valin from the hospital to the crime scene, where you discovered the murderer hid in the rose bushes. Is that correct?

MARK

Yes.

PRATT

Later, when you began to suspect Mrs. Valin of the crime, what did you do?

MARK

I sent her a bouquet of roses.

There's a titter of laughter in the audience.

PRATT

And what did you observe at that time?

MARK

She immediately developed a rash.

And on the Jury absorbing this information, and on Bonnie's desperate look, we CUT TO:

EXT. COURTROOM - DAY

Mark walks glumly out of the courtroom. Steve catches up with him.

STEVE

What's the matter, Dad? You were sensational. Your testimony is going to put her away.

MARK

That's exactly what's bothering me. Bonnie Valin is a friend.

STEVE

She's also a murderer. You proved it yourself. And to show my appreciation, when I get my promotion, you're the first person I'm taking out to lunch on my expense account.

MARK

Promotion?

STEVE

For wrapping up the Valin case so quickly, they're talking about making me head of the Special Crimes Task Force.

Mark breaks out in a smile.

MARK

Wonderful! Terrific! You're the perfect man for the job.

(then:)

Which is what, exactly?

STEVE

Pointman on the high-profile cases, a job which requires character, intelligence, experience--

MARK

And an expense account. You're the first member of the family to have one.

Mark claps his son on the back.

MARK (CONT'D)

I'm proud of you, son.

And on Steve beaming, we CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

Amanda comes in the hospital, trailed by a GRUNGY GUY wearing a baseball cap. Norman spots her and makes a beeline for her.

BRIGGS

Amanda -- we need to talk.

AMANDA

Only if you give me \$20.

BRIGGS

Excuse me?

AMANDA

I need it for the for cabbie. Consider it a loan. I'm experiencing a short-term cash flow problem.

BRIGGS

That's what I wanted to talk to you about.

Norman fishes into his pocket for a twenty and slaps it into the cabbie's hand.

AMANDA

What? No tip?

Briggs reluctantly puts a few coins in the cabbies hand. The cabbie and Amanda give him a harsh look.

BRIGGS

I got a call from a lawyer for Tidwell Properties and--

AMANDA

I'm a generous tipper, Norman.

BRIGGS

Maybe that's your problem.

Briggs puts a few crumpled bills in the cabbie's hand. The cabbie marches off.

AMANDA

Thanks, I owe you.

BRIGGS

Actually, you owe Tidwell Properties. They've got a court order to garnish your wages for unpaid rent.

Amanda is stunned.

AMANDA

I don't believe this is happening to me.

BRIGGS

I'd like to help, but you've taken my last dime.

AMANDA

Then you won't mind loaning me your car for a couple hours.

She holds out her hand, palm out. He didn't see that coming. And on Norman digging into his pocket once again, we CUT TO:

EXT. HOTEL POOL AREA - DAY

Once again, Eve is sunning herself. Once again, she looks stunning. This time, however, she's a lot less impressed with Jack, who's wearing his suit and floral tie.

EVE

You wasted your time digging up that old tie I gave you. I vowed years ago I'd never listen to another one of your excuses. So don't even try.

JACK

I won't. In fact, I've come to suggest you stay away from me for the rest of the convention.

EVE

That's one favor you won't have to ask twice.

(then, giving in)

Why?

JACK

I can't talk about it. Let's just say it's for your own protection.

EVE

Yeah, right.

JACK

Good-bye, Eve. It could've been special.

He takes her hand for a moment, then gets up to go. But as he does, he drops his wallet on the ground. It flashes open, revealing a shiny BADGE, before he snatches it up.

EVE

What was that?

JACK

It's better that you never know. Good-bye.

EVE

Jack, are you some kind of police officer?

JACK

Ssshhh!

He gets down close to her and speaks softly.

JACK (CONT'D)
No one is supposed to know.

EVE
I won't tell a soul.
(then:)
Know what?

JACK
I'm doing a little work for the
police, helping them solve Elliott
Valin's murder.

EVE
And that's what you were doing when
I saw you in the hall?

JACK
It's my responsibility to remain
silent on this delicate matter. I
can say no more.

EVE
I can. Forgive me for judging you so
harshly. Please, give me a second
chance. Can we have dinner tonight?

JACK
If you insist. But my lips are sealed.

Jack grins to himself.

AT THE OTHER END OF THE POOL

An ANCIENT SECURITY GUARD looks around for something on the
ground. Jack comes up behind him.

JACK (CONT'D)
Is this yours? I found it on the
bar.

And to the guard's astonished delight, Jack hands him his
badge.

JACK (CONT'D)
You gotta be more careful. If a less
responsible person had found that,
who knows what could've happened.

And as Jack walks away happy, we go to:

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

BONNIES VOICE
Thank you for coming. Frankly, I
didn't think you would.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - VISITOR'S AREA - DAY

Bonnie, in prison orange, sits across a wide table from Mark. A guard watches them closely.

MARK

Ordinarily, I would've just sent flowers, but considering the situation...

BONNIE

You know I didn't do it, Mark. In your heart, you know.

MARK

The evidence says otherwise -- I know because I found most of it myself.

BONNIE

There's just as much evidence out there that'll prove I'm innocent.

MARK

Where?

BONNIE

(frustrated:)

I don't know! But there has to be... because I didn't kill Elliott.

MARK

You knew Elliott was having an affair, and that he was about to file for divorce. That's motive. And you lied about your rash.

BONNIE

I didn't lie -- I was walking on the beach when Elliott was killed, just like I said. Surely there must be some way to prove it.

MARK

You could start by finding the tourist you say took your picture.

BONNIE

I can't -- but you can.

MARK

That's not my job.

BONNIE

Once you decided I was guilty, did you stop, for one second, to check out my story?

(MORE)

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Or were you so certain you were right,
that you didn't bother?

Bonnie has struck a nerve. Mark stares at her.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

All I'm asking is for you to believe
in me for one day -- one day against
the rest of my life. Is that too
much to ask?

MARK

You know how many thousands of
tourists come to Los Angeles each
day? How many of them visit the beach?

BONNIE

No -- but I'm praying that you'll
find out.

And on Mark's indecision, we CUT TO:

EXT. AMANDA'S APARTMENT - DAY

Amanda drives up in Norman's car to see ALL HER BELONGINGS
being carried out of her apartment and placed on the sidewalk
by WORKMEN. Watching over them is DOLLY TIDWELL, 30s, the
landlord. Amanda marches up to her.

AMANDA

What the hell do you think you're
doing?

DOLLY

Watching you move.
(to workers:)
Easy with that chair -- I don't want
my building scratched.

AMANDA

You can't just break into my apartment
and throw my belongings on the street!

DOLLY

The judge says I can.

Dolly slaps a piece of paper in Amanda's hand. Amanda scans
it with astonishment.

DOLLY (CONT'D)

Wish he said it a couple weeks ago --
I barely have time to paint the place
before the Dininos move in.

AMANDA

A couple weeks ago? How long has
this been going on?

DOLLY
Ever since you stopped paying rent
two months ago.

The WORKMEN accidentally drop a VASE, which shatters on the
pavement.

DOLLY (CONT'D)
Careful you idiots! I just had that
patio resurfaced!

And on Amanda's misery, we go to:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

JACKS VOICE
You're crazy, Mark. What you're asking
is impossible.

INT. SLOANS OFFICE - DAY

Jack stands in front of Mark's desk.

JACK
Thousands of people go to the beach
every day from all over the world --
and they don't sign a visitor's log.
We'll never find the guy, if he even
exists.

MARK
I got some details out of Bonnie
that might narrow our search. For
one thing, it was definitely a man.

JACK
That's a hot lead.

MARK
He was in his late 20s, wearing a
torn red jersey with a yellow number
11 on it. She said it was at least a
size too small for him.

JACK
Was this guy visiting the beach or
living on it?

MARK
That was my first thought, too. But
he had an expensive camera and new
running shoes.

JACK
So if he could afford clothes that
fit, why was he wearing some ratty
old jersey that was too small?

MARK

Unless he was wearing it for a specific reason.

They think on that for a moment. Jack fingers his UGLY FLORAL TIE and starts to take it off.

JACK

Maybe he was trying to impress an old friend.

Mark jumps up, pointing at Jack's tie.

MARK

That's it! Old friends!

JACK

I ought to wear this tie more often. It's inspirational.

MARK

What if the football jersey doesn't fit because he out-grew it? What if he was wearing to for his friends?

Jack gets it now.

JACK

A reunion. Maybe even at one of the beach hotels.

MARK

Still think I'm crazy?

STEVES VOICE

You're insane!

Steve marches into the office.

STEVE

I just heard you visited Bonnie Valin. We're in middle of a trial. What's gotten into you?

Jack rushes out and hands Steve his tie.

JACK

Take a look at this. It seems to clear everything up.

MARK

She's asked me to check out her alibi. I didn't see the harm.

STEVE

It's standing right in front of you. I could lose my promotion. My corner office. My expense account.

MARK

We're talking about a woman's life,
and all you can think about is a
gold card?

STEVE

Dad, you're our best witness. This
is a blatant ploy on her part to
rattle your confidence and compromise
your testimony.

MARK

But what if she's innocent? She could
end up spending her life in a
windowless cell -- thanks to me.

STEVE

See! It's working. She already has
you doubting yourself.

MARK

I have to know for sure, Steve.

STEVE

Fine -- but if you're screw up this
case, someone will definitely be
spending years in a windowless room.
(then:)

Me!

And on that, Steve stomps out.

EXT. PANGRAZIO'S OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Amanda drives up -- Norman's car bulging with HER STUFF,
with so much FURNITURE strapped to the outside that she could
have stepped out of "Grapes of Wrath" or the main titles of
"The Beverly Hillbillies." She bolts out of the car and runs
inside the building.

INT. PANGRAZIO'S OFFICE - DAY

She throws open the doors and stops dead in her tracks, her
jaw dropping in shock.

WIDE ANGLE - HER POV

The place is absolutely empty. Completely cleaned out.

BACK TO SCENE

And on Amanda's horror, we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

EXT. OCEAN BREEZE-INN - ESTABLISHING - DAY

If Holiday Inn doesn't own this place, they should.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Decor by Winnebago. A weary Jack trudges in, checks a list in his hand.

HIS POV - THE HANDWRITTEN LIST

Several hotels are listed (The Regent, Wilshire Tower, etc.) along with reunions (Northgate High, Primington High, Redwood High, Lincoln High etc.) Each one has a CHECK MARK next to it except for the last -- OCEAN BREEZE-INN: RESEDA HIGH SCHOOL 10 YEAR REUNION.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack straightens his tie and heads for MERTLE GIPE, a plain woman in her late 20s, at the RESEDA HIGH REUNION REGISTRATION desk. He glances at her name tag, then stops short of her desk, stunned.

JACK

Oh my God! Mertle! Look at you.

She looks at herself, confused.

JACK (CONT'D)

I can't believe it. You haven't changed at all!

MERTLE

In high school, I weighed 316 pounds.

JACK

But you've always been the same beautiful person inside, and that hasn't changed.

(then, low:)

You know I always had a crush on you.

MERTLE

Me? Really?

JACK

I couldn't take my eyes off you in English class.

(off her lost look:)

You do remember me, don't you?

MERLE
 (embarrassed:)
 Of course I do. How could I forget
 you?

JACK
 Have you seen Mike and Sally? I hear
 they have twins.

Jack spots a yearbook on the table. It's RED AND YELLOW. He
 opens it up.

MERTLE
 How come I didn't see you at the
 welcome banquet last week?

HIS POV - THE YEARBOOK

He finds a photo of the FOOTBALL TEAM, and spots NUMBER 11,
 a muscular young man named DAVE McDONNELL.

JACK
 I was in orbit. Piloting the space
 shuttle. Just got out of decompression
 this morning.

BACK TO SCENE

JACK (CONT'D)
 Say, hope I haven't missed Dave
 McDonnell. You know how close we
 were.

MERTLE
 He went back to Seattle a few days
 ago.

Jack suddenly looks past her and points.

JACK
 Hey -- isn't that Harvey?

She turns to look, and he sticks the yearbook inside his
 jacket and then runs off in the direction he pointed.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Harvey! Wait up!

As soon as Jack is out of her sight, he ducks into an alcove
 where there is a payphone. He dials.

JACK (CONT'D)
 (into phone:)
 When's your next flight to Seattle?

And on Jack's excitement, we CUT TO:

EXT. SEATTLE SKYLINE - DAY (STOCK)

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

as Jack, in the same clothes he was in when we last saw him, hops out of a SEATTLE TAXI CAB and runs into the building.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING CORRIDOR - DAY

Jack pounds on an apartment door. After a moment, it swings open and DAVE MCDONNELL, late 20s, buff, sticks his head out.

JACK

It's you. Thank God.

DAVE

That's what I say every day when I look in the mirror.

Who are you and what do you want?

JACK

I'm Doctor Jack Stewart from Los Angeles, and this may sound like a strange request, but I desperately need a picture of you.

DAVE

Well, you've certainly come to the right place.

Dave lets the door swing open.

JACKS POV - THE APARTMENT

The walls are covered with framed photos of Dave in front of every tourist attraction in the world.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Bonnie is on the stand, withering under prosecutor Pratt's attack.

PRATT

And yet, nobody saw you on the beach at the time of the murder, isn't that right?

BONNIE

No, it's not. There was a witness. I just don't know who he was...

Mark, in the audience, squirms. Where is Jack?

INT. DAVE MCDONNELLS APARTMENT - DAY

Jack and Dave sit on the floor going through shoeboxes full of photos. Jack's feverishly sifting through pictures, while Dave is enjoying himself.

DAVE

I know it's in here somewhere.

JACK

That's what you said ten shoeboxes ago.

DAVE

Hey, this is something.

JACK

What?

DAVE

Me outside Cheech Marin's house. Oh, and here I am inside Cheech Marin's house. And here I am leaving the Beverly Hills police station. They wouldn't let me take the camera into the cell.

(then:)

A-ha!

JACK

You found it?

DAVE

Yup. Me with Cheech Marin. That's him running at the camera with the baseball bat.

Jack stifles a scream and goes back to the search.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Pratt starts his summation.

PRATT

Arrogance. Hatred. Greed. You don't expect to find such ugliness in one so beautiful as Bonnie Valin.

Bonnie, at the defendant's table, turns to give Mark a pleading look. He shrugs desperately.

INT. DAVE MCDONNELLS APARTMENT - DAY

There are photographs and empty shoe boxes scattered all over the floor. Jack is at the edge of despair.

JACK

How can you have pictures of yourself with every celebrity in Los Angeles and not have the one photo that will save a life?

DAVE

I took the picture. It was a great one, too. I had her point at me just like I was a prize. I remember thinking I couldn't wait to get this roll developed because --

He stops, turns and looks at THE CAMERA hanging on the wall. Jack follows his gaze. They know where the picture is.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Pratt continues.

PRATT

...convinced that any jury would be so dazzled by her minor celebrity that she wouldn't even need a credible alibi for this heinous --

Mark squirms in his seat, checks his watch. Then his BEEPER goes off. He checks the number, jumps up, and runs out of the court room. Bonnie watches him, not daring to hope.

INT. COURTHOUSE LOBBY - DAY

Mark talks into a payphone.

MARK

What do you mean, you almost have it?

EXT. ONE-HOUR PHOTO STORE - DAY

Jack talks on a payphone as he and Dave watch pictures spilling out of one of those developing machines in the window.

JACK

We're talking minutes here.

Dave lets out a victorious whoop. Jack looks.

THE DEVELOPING MACHINE

is spitting out the picture in question -- Bonnie and Dave standing in front of a beautiful, placid ocean.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack grins.

JACK
 Keep our dinner warm, we'll be home
 soon.

He hangs up, pleased with himself. Then an ugly thought hits
 him.

JACK (CONT'D)
 Dinner. Eve. Damn.

DAVE
 You know Eve Plumb? She was always
 my favorite Brady.

AND AS JACK GLARES AT DAVE:

EXT. COURT HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

JUDGES VOICE
 Have you come to a verdict?

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The foreman of the jury stands, facing the court. Steve,
 Bonnie, and everyone else are apprehensive.

FOREMAN
 We have, your honor. We find the
 defendant--

MARKS VOICE
 Innocent!

All heads turn as Mark bursts through the doors, Dave
 McDonnell in tow. Bonnie's face lights up. Steve buries his
 face in his hands. Mark rushes up to the bench.

MARK
 Sorry to interrupt, your honor. But
 I wanted to prevent a terrible
 mistake.

JUDGE
 Too late -- you've already made it.
 You're in contempt.
 (to bailiff:)
 Remove this man from my courtroom.

MARK
 Bonnie Valin didn't kill her husband.
 These pictures -- and this man --
 prove it.

Mark drops the pictures on the bench as the bailiff starts
 to drag him away. The judge flips through them as Mark is
 dragged by the bailiff to the door.

JUDGE'S POV - THE PICTURES

First, a picture of Dave McDonnell, then a picture of Bonnie and Dave McDonnell on a serene beach.

MARK (CONT'D)

She was on the beach, just like she said, and this is the tourist who took her picture.

BACK TO SCENE

MARK (CONT'D)

He was here from Seattle for a reunion.

Mark is nearly out the door when the foreman says:

FOREMAN

Uh, your honor, we'd like to rethink our decision, if that's okay.

JUDGE

That won't be necessary.

He motions the bailiff to bring Mark back in.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I apologize, Dr. Sloan. You've performed a courageous act and prevented a travesty of justice.

The judge turns to the prosecutor, Carter Pratt.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

If it weren't for this concerned citizen, an innocent woman would have been unjustly imprisoned. You should be ashamed of yourselves for conducting such a shoddy investigation.

Pratt shoots Steve a look. Steve shoots Mark one, Mark shrugs apologetically. The judge turns to Bonnie.

JUDGE (CONT'D)

I hereby dismiss all charges against Bonnie Valin. Madam, you are free to go, and I hope you will accept the apology of this court.

He bangs his gavel. Bonnie jumps up, runs across the courtroom, and gives Mark an enormous hug.

BONNIE

Thank you. I knew you'd come through for me.

The prosecutor shoots Steve a withering look and gathers up his papers.

PRATT

We need to have a little talk,
detective. Now.

STEVE

Yes sir.

And with an angry glance at his father, he follows the prosecutor out of the courtroom. And on Mark, still being hugged by Bonnie, we CUT TO:

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - DAY

Jack, looking dead-tired, comes down the corridor to the doctors' lounge and pushes the door. It opens a crack, then Amanda pushes back from the other side.

AMANDA (O.S.)

Get out of here.

JACK

What do you mean, get out of here?
This lounge is for all doctors.

AMANDA

Was I unclear? Sorry, what I meant
was, get the hell out of here.

She slams the door. He pushes against it with all his weight. She pushes back, but he's stronger. The door swings open. He steps inside and sees

INT. DOCTORS LOUNGE

is crammed full of Amanda's belongings, including the bed Amanda was in the middle of making when Jack came in. She's tried to arrange them in some way, but there's far too much for the room. Amanda searches for some kind of explanation.

JACK

Now I understand. You were
redecorating the lounge, and you
didn't want me to see until it was
done.

AMANDA

(saves)
Exactly.

She pushes him towards the door.

JACK

I was joking.

AMANDA

Oh.

(then)

But I am redecorating. My condo. I needed a place to keep my stuff until it's done.

JACK

(eyes the bed)

Looks like you're keeping yourself here, too.

AMANDA

Paint fumes.

She waits breathlessly. Is he going for it?

JACK

That makes sense. I'll use the fifth floor lounge.

He starts to leave. She's pleased -- then suddenly furious.

AMANDA

You heartless bastard.

JACK

What'd I do?

AMANDA

Pretending to fall for a lame story like that. You've known all along.

JACK

I have?

AMANDA

You've been laughing at me behind my back. You and Binky and Bunny.

Finally, it's all too much for her. She bursts out sobbing. Jack, about as confused as he can be, puts his arms around her.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

He took my money. He took all my money. And he spent it all on...

(sobs)

...soup!

She goes off into a paroxysm of sobs. Jack really wants to ask what's going on, but this doesn't seem to be the time.

JACK

It's okay. We'll get your money back.

And as she sobs on his shoulder... p66

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

Mark rounds a corner and nearly collides with Kelso, who shoots past him in a wheelchair, his NECK IN A BRACE. Kelso does a screeching u-turn on the linoleum to face Mark and two orderlies who were chasing after him.

KELSO
Radical chair, dude.

Mark motions the orderlies away.

MARK
You keep coming back, we're going to have to give you a parking space. What happened this time?

Kelso shrugs sheepishly and starts to answer, but Mark interrupts him.

MARK (CONT'D)
Let me guess -- you ripped your stick into a totally excellent tube and maxed out.

KELSO
You got it. Hey man, I got an extra board. Wanna hit the surf with me and my buds tomorrow morning?

MARK
No thanks -- I'm on call in the morning. Besides, by the looks of it, the surf hits you.

Suddenly Mark freezes, a horrified look on his face. Kelso gets up, concerned.

KELSO
Want my chair?

Mark suddenly turns and runs down the hall.

INT. MARK'S OFFICE - DAY

Mark rushes in past a surprised Delores.

DELORES
Something wrong, Doctor?

MARK
Godzilla!

Delores goes to the TV.

DELORES

I didn't know you were such a fan of monster movies. Relax, I'm sure it hasn't been on long.

Mark goes directly to his desk, searches through his papers until he finds the picture of Dave McDonnell and Bonnie.

HIS POV - THE PICTURE

Bonnie and Dave in front of a tranquil sea.

DELORES (CONT'D)

Even if it has, I'm sure it's out on video.

BACK TO SCENE

MARK

I'm not talking about a movie. I'm talking about this.

He holds up the photo to her.

DELORES

She doesn't look like a monster to me.

MARK

It's low tide.
(off her look:)
Bonnie and the surfers were at the beach at the same time. If Bonnie was really there when Elliott was killed, it would have been high tide.

He drops the photo on his desk.

DELORES

So what does that mean?

MARK

It means I've been tricked. Thanks to me, Bonnie Valin will get away with murder. And there's absolutely nothing I can do about it.

And on Mark, as the unsettling realization sinks in, we FADE OUT.

END OF PART ONE

..

PART TWO

ACT FIVE FADE IN:

EXT. VALIN HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Mark emerges from the house to find Bonnie Valin in a bathing suit, sitting on a chaise lounge smearing SUNSCREEN on her body.

BONNIE

Mark -- what a pleasant surprise.
Pull up a chaise and enjoy the sun.

MARK

You killed Elliott.

BONNIE

Yep.

She holds out the sunscreen and smiles at him.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Could you spread a little sunscreen
on my back? I burn so easily.

MARK

You stood in the roses outside his
window, pumped his office full of
nitrous oxide, and watched him die.

BONNIE

I suppose I could have stabbed him,
or run him over with the car, but
that's so messy. Besides, he was
such a humorless bore, killing him
with laughing gas just felt right.

She laughs at the memory.

MARK

You are allergic to roses, aren't
you?

BONNIE

Of course I am. You proved that,
remember?

Mark can't believe this is happening -- and it shows on his face. She motions to the chaise beside her.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

Sit down, Mark. You're looking a bit
pale.

MARK

How long were you planning the murder?

BONNIE

Oh, I'd say at least a year. But I
couldn't have done it without you.

MARK

I can't tell you how that makes me feel.

Now he sits down.

BONNIE

I knew if I killed Elliott, you'd investigate, and you'd eventually prove I did it. So I decided to use that to my advantage. I knew you'd put me in jail -- but how could I convince you to get me out once you put me there?

MARK

Come up with a rotten alibi -- like taking a walk on the beach at the time of the murder.

BONNIE

Surely, if I had killed him, I would have come up with a solid alibi, right? But since I didn't have one, I knew that would give me credibility. All I needed was a challenging lead to give you.

MARK

The tourist you met on the beach.

BONNIE

Irresistible, wasn't it? I couldn't make it too easy -- you had to work at it, you had to honestly believe you'd accomplished the impossible. The only danger was that you wouldn't find him in time.

MARK

But I did -- and I walked right into your trap. You got the prosecution's star witness to prove your alibi.

BONNIE

You're such a dogged detective when you put your mind to it. Are you familiar with double-jeopardy?

MARK

I'm learning the hard way. A person can't be tried twice for the same crime.

BONNIE

Isn't our justice system marvelous?
(MORE)

BONNIE (CONT'D)

(then:)

Now I'm free to enjoy Elliott's money
without worrying about getting caught.
And I have you to thank.

Mark gets up and looks at her with sudden resolve.

MARK

I may not be able to put you in jail
for murder, but I can make sure you
never see a dime of Elliott's money.

BONNIE

Double-jeopardy, darling. I thought
we just covered that.

MARK

I'll give the insurance company all
the evidence they need to sue you.
And win. You won't get the life
insurance payoff, and you'll spend
everything else on lawyers.

Suddenly she doesn't look quite so smug. He smiles at her.

MARK (CONT'D)

You might want to lie down, you're
looking a little pale.

(then:)

I can find my own way out. Be seeing
you.

And he walks back towards the house. Bonnie whirls around,
eager to twist the knife one more time.

BONNIE

Of course you will -- at the Surgeon
of the Year awards ceremony.

MARK

(shocked:)

You're not actually going to accept
Elliott's award?

BONNIE

It's gold-plated. Maybe I can melt
it down into something I can sell.

On her laughter, Mark turns and heads back into the house.

INT. VALIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Mark walks towards the door when something catches his eye.
He turns to see

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Dave McDonnell is mixing a VITAMIN SHAKE, pouring VITAPACKETS into a blender. His shirt is off, and he's wearing a skimpy speedo. He smiles at Mark.

DAVE

Hey, thanks for the plane ticket.
You saved me a few bucks.

Mark scowls at him and marches out the door. Dave smiles, and on him sipping his drink, we CUT TO:

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Over we hear APPLAUSE.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

P72

DOCTORS are pouring out of a conference room. A placard shows they've just finished listening to "A SEMINAR ON MEDICAL ADVANCES IN HUMAN SEXUALITY." Lloyd Fleming walks alongside Eve Lurie.

LLOYD

I thought that was a stimulating seminar, didn't you?

EVE

It think it raised some big issues.

LLOYD

I know it did. Perhaps we could explore the larger issues in more detail over cocktails. I have a fully-stocked wetbar in my suite.

JACKS VOICE

Then you won't get thirsty while Eve and I talk.

Jack appears at Eve's side.

JACK

Sorry I missed the seminar, but for me it covered a lot of old ground.

(to Lloyd:)

Could you excuse us?

But Eve stands firm.

EVE

(to Lloyd:)

You don't have to go, Lloyd.

(MORE)

EVE (CONT'D)

(to Jack:)

We have nothing to talk about.

JACK

I didn't mean to stand you up the other night, but--

LLOYD

(interrupts:)

Don't worry -- I filled in.

EVE

And we had a wonderful time.

JACK

I'm glad you did, because while you two were enjoying dinner, I was saving a woman's life.

EVE

(yeah, right:)

I called the hospital, you weren't there.

LLOYD

Nice try, Jack.

JACK

I was in Seattle, finding the one person who could prove Bonnie Valin didn't kill her husband.

EVE

You were the one who found that guy? That's what you were being so secretive about?

JACK

Until the case was closed, it was my responsibility to be discreet. Unfortunately, that meant hurting you.

Eve sees Jack in a new light. Lloyd is losing ground fast.

LLOYD

She wasn't hurting. She was with me. She was deliriously happy.

EVE

(to Lloyd:)

Could you excuse us, Jack and I need to talk.

LLOYD

What about our drink?

JACK

I hear you've got a terrific wetbar.

Jack takes her arm in his and leads her away, leaving Lloyd scowling.

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. DOCTORS LOUNGE - DAY

Amanda's stuff is still crammed in here, but she's had some time to do a little arranging, and it doesn't look too bad -- pictures on the wall, candles on a table. Amanda is just arranging some knick-knacks on a bookshelf when Jack comes in.

JACK

A friend of the family has tracked down Pangrazio.

AMANDA

"Friend of the family," eh? You mean --

She bends her nose.

JACK

No, a travel agent. He checked the international flights from LAX and found Pangrazio's ticket to South America. From there he could have gone anywhere.

AMANDA

With all my money. We'll never find him.

JACK

We don't have to.

AMANDA

Easy for you to say, you're not living in the doctor's lounge.

JACK

He'll come to us.

And on her confused look, we CUT TO:

EXT. RANCH HOUSE - DAY

It's absolutely nothing special, just any old house in the valley.

AMANDA (O.S.)

I've never seen anything like it.

INT. RANCH HOUSE LIVING ROOM - DAY

The furnishings are strictly from Ikea, but every wall is covered with OLD MASTERS and IMPRESSIONISTS.

AMANDA

My grandfather's art collection filled museums in three cities, and he didn't have anything like this.

Jack coolly studies a landscape.

JACK

It's okay, if you go for that kind of thing.

AMANDA

Okay? That's a Renoir, maybe the greatest artist ever.

JACK

If he didn't paint on black velvet, I don't want to know about it.

That's when PETER SYMES, a dapper man in his 50s, comes in.

SYMES

So sorry to keep you waiting.

AMANDA

Don't be. I'd be happy just to stare at this painting for hours.

SYMES

You like it?

AMANDA

It's one of the most beautiful things I've ever seen.

SYMES

Great. Take it. I got plenty more where that came from.

He goes to a cabinet and pulls out FOUR IDENTICAL PAINTINGS.

SYMES (CONT'D)

I think the frame really works well on that one.

Amanda is stunned. Peter goes over to a CANVAS-COVERED EASEL.

AMANDA

Wait a minute -- these are forgeries?

SYMES

I prefer to call them "differently-created originals." Has a ring to it, don't you think?

JACK

Peter's work hangs in some of the world's finest museums.

AMANDA

(re: Renoir)

But this is perfect...

SYMES

It's so nice to see someone who appreciates fine art. Not junk like this.

He whips the canvas off, revealing a PAINTING OF A CAN OF CREAM OF CELERY SOUP.

JACK

Third and last in a series. The original was stolen from a Boston museum last year and hasn't been seen since.

SYMES

Hardly seems worth the effort.

JACK

It will -- to the collector who owns the other two pieces.

AMANDA

Do you really think Pangrazio will come out of hiding for this?

SYMES

Once we get the word out, nothing will keep him away.

JACK

After all, this is one of the essential cornerstones of the New York pop art movement of the early 1960s.

(then)

At least, it will be, once it's dry.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Steve sits at his desk, laboriously going through file after file, opening each one, checking the papers inside, and typing up a list. The huge stack of boxes surrounding him suggests he'll be doing this for a long into the night... and for many nights to come. Steve barely looks up as Mark approaches uncomfortably.

MARK

Looks like the Special Crimes Task Force is keeping pretty busy.

STEVE

I wouldn't know. I've been reassigned. I'm on the Excellence in Policework Task Force now.

MARK

You're moving up fast.

STEVE

My job is to go through every arrest file in the precinct and make sure the paperwork is in order.

Mark winces. This is his fault, and he knows it.

MARK

No expense account, eh?

STEVE

After Bonnie Valin's trial, I'm lucky to have a salary.

(then:)

I'm a little busy here, Dad. Is there something I can do for you?

Mark pulls up a chair.

MARK

Remember when you were fifteen and you desperately wanted to go to military school?

STEVE

Dad...

MARK

I tried to talk you out of it, but you wouldn't listen. You wouldn't even talk to me until I signed the application.

Steve throws down his file and tries to end this jaunt down memory lane.

STEVE

And I was miserable there. I didn't last two weeks. You were right, I was wrong, and I really have to get back to work.

MARK

Do you remember when you came back home? Did I ever say "I told you so"?

STEVE

You welcomed me with open arms.
Unfortunately, I don't have time to
reciprocate right now.

MARK

The point is, and I want you to keep
the military school story in mind
when I tell you this because fathers
and sons should be free to make
mistakes and --

STEVE

Dad!

MARK

Bonnie Valin is guilty.

STEVE

What?

MARK

She tricked me. She tricked all of
us. She's a vicious, cold-blooded
killer, and you have to stop her.

STEVE

It's a little late for that.

MARK

Believe me, I know all about double-
jeopardy -- but there must be a way.

STEVE

The officer in charge has arrested a
suspect in connection with the
killing. Dr. Valin's son.

MARK

Roger Valin? But he's innocent.

STEVE

He was seen leaving Dr. Valin's clinic
the night before the killing, and a
blue blazer was found in his closet
with a torn sleeve. The evidence may
not be as compelling as a photograph,
but it should work for a jury.

MARK

You're making a terrible mistake.

STEVE

I already made one. I came home from
military school.

With that, he turns back to his file. And on Mark's angst:

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - NEXT DAY

as a sleek STRETCH LIMO glides to a stop in front. The doorman opens the door and out steps Jack, wearing sunglasses and an Italian suit, and Amanda, looking drop-dead gorgeous in a sharp suit.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Jack approaches the front desk.

JACK

I believe the penthouse is reserved for me. The name is Miles. Jason Miles.

TWO STOCKY MEN

sitting in the lobby, turn at the sound of his name. We will come to know them as DICKERSON AND MAYER.

BACK TO SCENE

The desk clerk hands Jack a key.

CLERK

Of course, sir. As you requested, a magnum of Dom Perignon is waiting for you on ice.

JACK

Thank you.

Jack and Amanda head to the elevator. Dickerson and Mayer share a look.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY

Jack and Amanda step inside. Jack punches the button for the penthouse. Just as the doors slide closed, CHARLES LANE, 30s, slips inside. He's wearing a suit and carrying a briefcase.

LANE

Jason Miles?

JACK

Funny, that's my name, too.

Lane doesn't like the smart-ass remark, but presses on anyway.

LANE

I represent a certain third party who's interested in--
(lowers his voice:)
Cream of celery.

JACK

I prefer Clam Chowder myself, but to each his own.

He's getting pissed now.

LANE

Let me be very clear. This certain third party understands you have a certain can of soup available for purchase at a certain price.

JACK

Certainly.

AMANDA

But not to you.

Jack shoots her a "butt out" look.

LANE

He'll double any other offer on the table.

AMANDA

Jack doesn't deal with middlemen.

JACK

I'm Jason.

AMANDA

(to Lane:)

Yes he is, and don't you forget it, jack. Jason took a big risk acquiring the soup. So your buyer will show some respect and deal with him face-to-face.

LANE

That's unacceptable.

JACK

Then I guess a certain third party will go hungry.

AMANDA

So hit the road, jack. And don't you come back no more.

The elevator stops at the Penthouse floor. Jack and Amanda step out.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

as soon as the doors close, Jack is on Amanda's ass.

JACK

What the hell were you doing in there?

AMANDA

Making sure the fish took the bait,
as they say "in the game."

JACK

What game? What are you talking about?

AMANDA

You don't need to patronize me, I
know what's "going down."

Amanda takes a slim book out of her purse. "The Swindler's
Guidebook by Sammy Backlin." He snatches the book from her

JACK

I knew I made a mistake letting you
get involved in this. You should
have stayed at the hospital.

She snatches the book back and shoves it in her purse.

AMANDA

It's my money.

JACK

Do you want it back or not?
(off her nod:)
Then let me handle it. We'll get
your money and Pangrazio, if you
haven't scared him off already.

AMANDA

Sorry.

They reach the penthouse. He unlocks the door and they go
inside.

JACK

It's okay, just stay out of it from
now on. I know what I'm doing.

INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

It's gorgeous. It's huge. Jack heads for the lavish wetbar.

JACK

This is a very delicate operation.
You have to be able to see ten steps
ahead of everybody else. There isn't
a move anybody can make that I haven't
already anticipated.

That's when a MAN pops up from behind the wetbar and aims
his SILENCER-EQUIPPED GUN at them. Amanda gasps. Jack manages
a limp smile and slowly raises his hands.

JACK (CONT'D)

Except that one.

And on our their fear, and the gunman's resolve, we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT FIVE

ACT SIX

FADE IN:

INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

Continuous from before. The GUNMAN steps out from behind the wetbar. He is thin, wiry, and dressed entirely in black. His name is ALAN SMITHEE, 30s.

SMITHEE

You have no right to sell cream of celery. Only I can.

JACK

Your name wouldn't be Campbell, would it?

SMITHEE

There's only two things you need to know about me -- I stole the soup, and I'm holding the gun.

AMANDA

We meant no offense, Mr. Cat Burglar. Honest.

SMITHEE

Shut up.

Amanda catches her breath.

SMITHEE (CONT'D)

You're nothing but low-life swindlers with a fake painting trying to cut in on my action. I ought to kill you both right now.

JACK

After all we've done for you?

Jack lowers his hands and goes to the Dom Perignon.

JACK (CONT'D)

Sure, you stole the painting. That was the easy part.

SMITHEE

(furious:)

Easy?!

Amanda winces, preparing for the gunshot. But all she hears is a CHAMPAGNE CORK popping. She opens her eyes to see Jack calmly pouring three glasses.

JACK

I had to get the word out, line up the buyers, check out their credentials -- and I didn't even have the original painting to work with. That's the tough part.

(then:)

And all I want in return for my strenuous efforts is a paltry seventy-five percent.

Amanda, terrified, grabs a glass of champagne and downs it in one gulp.

SMITHEE

Forty.

JACK

Sixty-five.

SMITHEE

Forty.

JACK

You don't seem to understand how negotiation works.

SMITHEE

Forty.

(cocks the trigger:)

And I get to keep the fake as a memento.

JACK

Done. You're one savvy negotiator.

Smithee backs toward the window and steps out.

SMITHEE

I'll be watching you, conman.

He reaches up, grabs a rope and climbs up, out of sight. Jack and Amanda stare at the window for beat, then Jack takes a sip of champagne and turns to Amanda.

JACK

It's going pretty well so far, don't you think?

And on her furious look, we GO TO:

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

ROGER

It's very thoughtful of you to come visit me.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - VISITORS CENTER - DAY

Roger, in prison orange, sits across the wide table from Mark, who, if anything, seems even more uncomfortable than he was when he was visiting Bonnie. The same guard watches them closely.

MARK

You may not think so after I say what I came to tell you.

ROGER

You're not here because you feel responsible, are you?

MARK

Well, frankly, yes.

ROGER

Don't worry about me. I'll be out as soon as the police realize I'm innocent.

MARK

Unfortunately, they're busy looking for evidence that makes you look guilty. They know you were the one who visited Elliott the night before he was killed.

ROGER

That's no problem. I'll just explain the truth: I went to borrow money to keep my holistic practice alive, and he refused. We had a fight, then I left.

Oy. Mark squirms.

MARK

You have seen a lawyer, haven't you?

ROGER

Why do I need a lawyer? I'm innocent.

MARK

This is all my fault.

ROGER

Because you proved Bonnie is innocent, too?

(MORE)

ROGER (CONT'D)

(off Mark's look)

Bonnie is a beautiful person who made my father very happy. If one of us has to be in jail for a crime we didn't commit, better it be me than her.

Mark squirms guiltily.

MARK

Well, you see, here's the thing...

ROGER

Bonnie is delicate. She wouldn't last a month in prison. And if my being here is keeping her out, then it's all worth it. At least I'm able to do some good here.

MARK

Some good?

ROGER

Do you know why prisons are such violent and miserable places?

MARK

Because they're filled with violent and miserable people?

ROGER

Meat. It's a proven fact that eating meat raises the testosterone level in men, and that testosterone leads to violence. So I've petitioned the warden to put all prisoners on a strict vegan diet.

MARK

Don't you think maybe you should wait to start your crusade until after you get out? Some of the other inmates might like meat.

ROGER

Are you kidding? Hardened criminals have been coming up to me and saying they want me to be their friend. Their very close friend. If that's not progress, what is it?

MARK

I'll get you out of here soon, Roger, I promise.

ROGER

Don't worry about me. Just promise you'll find the monster who took my father's life and make him pay. And give my love to Bonnie.

Maybe this isn't the best time to tell Roger the truth. Mark stands, motions to the guard to let him out.

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

JACKS VOICE

Eve -- it's Jack. I hope you have nothing planned for this afternoon...

INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

Jack is on the phone. Amanda is glaring at him.

JACK

...because I've got a limo waiting to whisk us away for a day of sightseeing.

(then:)

Great -- I'll meet you in the lobby.

AMANDA

I didn't reserve the penthouse suite and pay for a limousine so you could romance an old flame!

JACK

I'm paying for everything. You're broke remember?

AMANDA

Well, I'm going to be paying for it eventually, assuming your plan works.

JACK

It will. Now relax. That's what I'm going to do.

He grabs his sunglasses and rushes out.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Jack strides across the lobby and meets Eve. Dickerson and Mayer peel out of the shadows behind him.

EVE

What a wonderful surprise. I hope it wasn't too much trouble.

JACK

It's the least I can do to make up for the other night. From now on,

(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
 nothing will get in the way of us
 becoming reacquainted.

That's when Dickerson and Mayer catch up to Jack. Mayer throws him up against a pillar, pins his arms behind his back, and cuffs him. Dickerson flashes his ID.

DICKERSON
 FBI Special Agent Matthew Dickerson.
 Organized Crime Task Force. You're
 under arrest.

EVE
 Forget about getting reacquainted
 Jack. I already know you too well.

She storms off. Jack calls out after her.

JACK
 Wait! I can explain!

DICKERSON
 Good -- because we've got lots of
 questions.

And on Jack's misery, we CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - DAY

An ORDERLY, his back to us, comes up to a nurse.

ORDERLY
 Excuse me, nurse, I need to get hold
 of Dr. Mark Sloan.

INT. MARKS OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Delores talks into the phone.

DELORES
 He's not here, but I'll call you as
 soon --

That's when Mark comes in, looking worried.

MARK
 I've got a lot of thinking to do,
 Delores. I'm not to be disturbed
 unless it's an --

DELORES
 There's an emergency in operating
 room seven.

He wheels around and heads right out the door.

MARK

-- emergency.

SHE WATCHES HIM GO, THEN:

DELORES

(into phone:)

He'll be right down.

INT. CORRIDOR - DAY

The nurse hangs up the phone.

NURSE

He'll be right there.

ORDERLY

Thank you.

The orderly turns to walk away, and as he does, we see it's DAVE.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

It's dark. Mark pokes his head in.

MARK

Hello? Emergency?

There's no answer. He comes in.

MARK (CONT'D)

Is anyone there?

He crosses the room to switch on the lights. That's when the door slams shut. There's a HISS. Mark rushes back to the door, pulls on it. It's stuck shut.

MARK (CONT'D)

Hey!

He yanks on the doors, but they won't budge.

MARK (CONT'D)

If this is some kind of joke, it isn't funny!

That's when a giggle escapes from him. Uh-oh. He looks up and sees Dave waving at him through the observation window as he leaves. Mark breaks down in helpless laughter and we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT SIX

ACT SEVEN

FADE IN:

EXT COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

MARK (O.S.)
This really isn't funny.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Mark fights to control his giggles.

MARK
But it sure seems funny.

He searches the operating room, finally finding what he was looking for -- a large tank labeled NITROUS OXIDE: DANGER.

MARK (CONT'D)
There you are, you little dickens.

He twists the valve -- and it snaps off in his hand. He looks at it, and bursts out laughing. The HISSING gets louder. He sniffs the gas, and laughs even harder. Fighting to control himself, he picks up the phone and dials sloppily, so intoxicated with laughing gas he can hardly hit the buttons. Somehow, he finds this hilarious. INTERCUT WITH:

INT. MARKS OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Delores snaps up the phone.

DELORES
Dr. Sloan's office.

MARK
Delores! Delores!

DELORES
Yes, Doctor Sloan?

Mark fights to get his laughter under control. He takes a deep break, looks serious, and:

MARK
Delores, is your refrigerator running?
Well, you'd better catch it!

He bursts into uncontrollable giggles as she slams down the phone.

MARK (CONT'D)
Delores?

END INTERCUTTING. Mark curses himself between guffaws -- that's not what he meant to say. He dials another number, gasping for breath as the phone rings. INTERCUT WITH:

INT. NORMAN BRIGGS OFFICE - DAY

Norman grabs the phone.

BRIGGS
Make it short. I'm a busy man.

MARK
Norman. I'm dying.

Unfortunately, that's when Mark lapses into a fit of laughing.

BRIGGS
I'm glad you're so amused, but I,
for one, am fed up with being the
butt of every joke in this hospital.

Mark only laughs harder at that. Norman starts to hang up.

MARK
He's killing me! I'm dying down here!

BRIGGS
I'm sure you are. But next time, do
it at someone else's expense.

MARK
No wait! That's not what --

But it's too late. Norman hangs up. END INTERCUT.

MARK (CONT'D)
(to the tank)
I'm dead.

Mark howls with laughter. He goes to the observation window and pounds on it. It won't budge.

MARK (CONT'D)
Tell you what we need right now...

He spots a stool across the room and heads for it. But on his way, he's distracted by the stereo.

MARK (CONT'D)
...is some music.

He pushes a button and BIG BAND MUSIC fills the operating room. Mark picks up a scalpel and starts to conduct, all thoughts of escape pushed out his mind by his intoxication.

INT. MARKS OUTER OFFICE - DAY

Norman storms in, furious.

BRIGGS

I'm a busy man, Delores, and I don't have time for Dr. Sloan's childish, asinine jokes.

DELORES

I'm not busy, and Lord knows I'm not a man, but I don't have time for them, either.

BRIGGS

Then where is he?

INT. OPERATING ROOM - DAY

TANGO MUSIC blares over the stereo. In the center of the room, Mark dances a spectacular tango, using the gas tank as his partner.

INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE OPERATING ROOM - DAY

Norman rushes up to the operating room, furious. That's when he notices

THE DOORS

are chained shut.

BACK TO SCENE

Now Norman looks a little worried. He peers in and sees

HIS POV - THROUGH THE OBSERVATION WINDOW

Mark's dance with the tank has changed from a tango to a Gene Kelly-esque improv. When he sees Norman, he waves and blows the administrator a kiss.

BACK TO SCENE

Norman grabs a fire axe from the nearby hose-box and smashes the chain off the doors. Covering his nose and mouth with a handkerchief, he kicks open the doors and goes in, grabbing the still-laughing Mark and pulling him to safety in the corridor. Mark's giggles turn to gasps as he fills his lungs with oxygen.

BRIGGS

Oh my God, you really were dying.

Mark nods, still trying to catch his breath.

BRIGGS (CONT'D)

Did you see that? I broke down the door with an ax!

MARK

You're going to bill me for the door, aren't you?

BRIGGS

Are you kidding? I'll gladly pay for it myself. I've never felt so exhilarated! Saving lives feels great!

(picks up the ax:)

In fact, I feel like chopping down another one. There must be someone else dying around here.

And off he goes, leaving Mark to watch after him. And on Mark's look, we CUT TO:

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

DICKERSONS VOICE

We've never stopped watching you, Jack.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack sitting, miserable, on the couch, while Dickerson and Mayer question him. By the looks of this, it's been going on awhile. Amanda looks very concerned -- for her, this is a nightmare.

DICKERSON

You thought you were so clever going into medical school. We weren't fooled for a second.

MAYER

No one in your family is capable of going legit.

JACK

But I am a doctor.

MAYER

And what a brilliant cover it is, too.

DICKERSON

We know all about the theft, the forgery, and your little fine art auction.

MAYER

You're gonna make a great prison doctor.

Amanda's lower lip starts to tremble. It's all she can do not to cry.

JACK

It's not what it looks like.

DICKERSON

You mean you aren't peddling the stolen Cream of Celery Soup, then double-crossing the buyer with a fraud?

JACK

Okay, so it is what it looks like, but not for the reasons you think.

MAYER

You're going down -- question is for how long. Tell us the names of people involved, and how you did the job, and maybe you'll get out in time to collect your first Social Security check.

AMANDA

This isn't fair!

Amanda suddenly bursts into tears and babble:

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Hank Pangrazio took all my money and disappeared so I was living in the doctors lounge and Jack said he could get my money back because Pangrazio doesn't have Cream of Celery to go with his Cream of Broccoli and Cream of Asparagus--

DICKERSON

Calm down, Miss.

MAYER

No need to get hysterical.

AMANDA

(continuous:)

--but Jack didn't have the Cream of Celery that was stolen so he had one made but we were only going to use it to get my money back but now we're going to jail and it's not our fault.

Dickerson holds up his hands, begging her to stop.

DICKERSON

Okay -- okay -- get a hold of yourself. It's all right. We understand.

MAYER

We do?

DICKERSON
Please, just stop crying.
(to Jack:)
Is it true?

JACK
Every word.

That's when there's a KNOCK at the door. Dickerson motions to Jack and speaks low.

DICKERSON
See who it is.

Jack goes to the door. He peers through the door.

HIS POV - THROUGH THE PEEP HOLE

It's Charles Lane, looking anxious.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack turns to the FBI agents and whispers.

JACK
That's Pangrazio's middleman. If you believe us, even a little bit, you've got to hide in the closet.

Dickerson and Mayer share a look. Amanda's lip starts to tremble again. Dickerson speaks quickly, holding up his hands, desperately warding off another hysterical crying jag.

DICKERSON
Okay, okay, we'll go in the closet.

MAYER
We will?

DICKERSON
But try anything funny and we come out firing.

They slip into the closet. As soon as they are inside, Amanda is instantly composed.

AMANDA
(low, off his look:)
Swindler's Guidebook, Chapter Seven:
When all else fails, start crying.

Jack is impressed. He opens the door. Lane rushes in.

LANE
The buyer will be here tonight. Do you have the soup?

JACK
It will be here.

There's a KNOCK at the door. Jack goes to the door, saying under his breath:

JACK (CONT'D)
If it's dry.

He peeks through the peephole.

HIS POV - THROUGH THE PEEPHOLE

It's Peter Symes, with the canvas-covered fraud.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack turns to Lane.

JACK (CONT'D)
Have you seen the bathroom in this place? The wallpaper is extraordinary. Show him, Amanda.

Jack shoves them both in the bathroom and closes the door. He opens the front door, and pulls Symes into the room.

SYMES
Fresh off the easel.

JACK
A work of art.

Jack slides the painting under the couch. That's when there's another KNOCK at the door.

IN THE CLOSET
Dickerson and Mayer peek out the door and share a bewildered look.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack motions to Symes.

JACK
Under the bed. Now.

Symes goes. Jack answers the door. It's Eve. She marches into the room.

EVE
I've never been so humiliated in my entire life.

JACK
Think how I felt. Those guys could have ruined my reputation with that
(MORE)

JACK (CONT'D)
practical joke. You didn't really
believe those clowns were FBI agents
did you?

IN THE CLOSET
Mayer is about to step out, but
Dickerson holds him back.

BACK TO SCENE

Eve isn't buying a word of it.

EVE
How dare you drag me into your sordid,
criminal dealings.

JACK
Don't you think you're exaggerating
just a bit?

That's when Jack sees past her to the window. A ROPE drops
into view.

EVE
I thought you'd changed. I thought
you'd learned some responsibility.

JACK
I have. I take full responsibility
for this.

He opens a tiny coat closet, pushes her inside, and closes
the door, locking it. Then he rushes to the window just as
Smithee climbs in.

JACK (CONT'D)
Nice of you to drop in.

SMITHEE
Have you put together the deal?

The bathroom door opens. Smithee ducks behind the couch.
Lane pushes past Amanda.

AMANDA
You could take a swatch of that and
frame it.

LANE
For the hundredth time, it's
worthless. It's run of the mill
flowered wallpaper. What makes you
think it's so special?

AMANDA
(shrugs:)
You're the one buying a soup can.

LANE

(to Jack:)

Could we please get this over with?

JACK

The buyer brings half-a-mill in cash to me tonight. He leaves with the Cream of Celery.

LANE

Fine.

(to Jack:)

Just keep her away from me.

Lane leaves. As soon as the door is closed, Smithee pops up from behind the couch.

JACK

I did my part. Now you do yours.

SMITHEE

I'll bring the soup, but if you try to rip me off, the next time he sees the wallpaper, your brains will be all over it.

JACK

A simple thank you would have been fine.

Smithee climbs out the window. As soon as he's gone, Symes crawls out from under the bed.

SYMES

I'm very confused.

Jack leads him to the door.

JACK

It's because you breath too many paint fumes. Fresh air, that's what you need. Trust me, I'm a doctor.

Symes leaves. Jack barely gets a chance to catch his breath, when the closet doors slide open and Dickerson and Mayer step out, sweating profusely.

MAYER

We'll be back tonight.

DICKERSON

You bought yourself a little slack -- don't hang yourself with it.

They leave. Jack falls against the door, letting out a deep breath. Amanda smiles approvingly.

AMANDA

You're amazing, Jack. I'm seeing a side of you I never knew existed.

The coat closet door SPLINTERS OPEN as a haggard Eve throws herself against it.

EVE

That makes two of us.

She SLAPS Jack and marches out the door, slamming it behind her. Amanda looks at Jack in shock.

JACK

Is there a chapter in your book that covers this?

And on his look, we CUT TO:

EXT. VALIN HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - DAY

Mark's car is parked out front. On the CURB are two TRASH CANS.

BONNIES VOICE

I didn't expect to see you around here again.

INT. VALIN HOUSE - DAY

Mark follows her into the living room, where she is pulling TARPS over the furniture.

MARK

Or anywhere else. Dave McDonnell tried to kill me this afternoon.

BONNIE

That's not very polite. I'll have to talk to him about that.

MARK

I'd like to talk to him myself.

BONNIE

Sorry, darling, he's gone off to buy us a tropical island somewhere. I'll make sure he sends you a postcard.

MARK

You sent Dave to kill me because you were afraid I'd prevent you from getting Elliott's life insurance money.

BONNIE

Now why would I do that?

(MORE)

BONNIE (CONT'D)

You haven't presented me with Elliott's award yet. I'm so looking forward to that.

MARK

Doesn't it bother you that Roger -- who loves you, who trusts you -- could end up going to prison for a crime he didn't commit?

BONNIE

Oh yes, it will weigh heavily on my mind as I sip my pina coloda, my gaze drifting out over a perfect white-sandy beach to the emerald sea. And I will think: better him than me.

MARK

This isn't over, Bonnie.

BONNIE

It is for now. As much as I'd love to chat the day away, I have a lot of packing to do before tonight's awards ceremony. You do know your way out, don't you?

And on Mark's disgust, we CUT TO:

EXT. VALIN HOUSE - DAY

Mark is walking to his car, when he spots the CITY TRASH TRUCK coming up to the curb. Two GARBAGEMEN hop off the truck. They pick up Bonnie's trash cans and dump them into the truck -- and that's when Mark sees

HIS POV - THE TRUCK

Dave's RED AND YELLOW FOOTBALL JERSEY tumbles in amidst the banana peels, wrappers and other trash.

BACK TO SCENE

As the garbage men move on to the trash cans at the next house, Mark snatches the jersey from the trash truck, then spots something else amidst the refuse. He picks up TWO of Dave's used USED VITA-SHAKE PACKETS and sniffs them. And as he examines the packets, his mind working, we CUT TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. MARK'S OFFICE - DAY

Mark sits at his desk. Steve paces across from him.

STEVE

You dragged me away from my office to tell me you found a jersey in the trash?

MARK

Not just any jersey. The one that was so important to Dave McDonnell that he kept it for ten years. Do you realize what this means?

STEVE

Bonnie Valin paid him enough for his part in the murder he could afford a new one.

MARK

She killed him.

STEVE

Sure, that's what you say now. We can wait until I've destroyed what little is left of my career before you change your mind.

Mark thrusts a file at him.

MARK

I found Dave's vita-shake packets in her trash. The lab tests show they contained rat poison.

STEVE

So maybe she had rats that were into health food. Dad, I know you want to help, but this is all meaningless without a body or a confession.

MARK

Then we'll just have to get them. Will one of each do?

STEVE

Dad, I can't do this.

Mark picks up a copy of DAVE MCDONNELL'S YEARBOOK from his desk.

MARK

Sure you can. Meet me at Elliott Valin's office in half an hour. Oh, and bring a camera.

STEVE

Do you realize where they'll put me if the Police Efficiency Task Force falls behind in its paperwork?

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

I don't look good in a metermaid's miniskirt.

MARK

Don't be so hard on yourself, son.
You have great legs.

Mark heads for the door.

STEVE

Where are you going?

MARK

Dry cleaners, to pick up my tuxedo.
I've got an award to give tonight.

STEVE

If you really believe she murdered
her husband, how can you give her
his award?

MARK

It will be my pleasure.

And with an enigmatic smile, he's gone. Steve stares after him, and we FADE OUT.

END OF ACT SEVEN

ACT EIGHT

FADE IN:

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - ESTABLISHING - NIGHT

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Jack stands on the deck, glancing at his watch.

JACK

Where is he?

Amanda comes out and joins him.

AMANDA

Who?

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Jack looks up.

JACK

Mr. Cat Burglar.

HIS POV - THE ROOF

No sign of Smithee. Just the perfect, moonlit sky.

JACK (CONT'D)
I'm meeting Pangrazio in the lobby
in ten minutes.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack looks down.

JACK (CONT'D)
And then he's going to want to see
the Cream of Celery, and I don't
have it.

AMANDA
You can always use the fake.

HIS POV - THE POOL

Shimmers in the night, a dozen floors below. Again, no sign
of Smithee climbing up.

JACK
No I can't.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack turns to Amanda.

JACK (CONT'D)
When I slid it under the couch, I
smeared the paint on the carpet.

AMANDA
That settles it. Next time I need a
painting forged, I'm taking my
business elsewhere.

Jack gives her a look, then turns to go back to the apartment.
He freezes. Smithee is standing there, holding the Cream of
Celery painting.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

Amanda and Jack come in.

JACK
How did you get in here?

SMITHEE
The front door.

JACK
Of course. Why didn't I think of
that.

Jack takes the painting and offers Smithee his hand.

JACK (CONT'D)

Thanks. Tell us where to send the check and we'll be in touch.

SMITHEE

It took me three years of planning to break into the museum and steal the painting. I'm not about to hand it over to a conman I met yesterday.

JACK

I thought we developed a bond.

SMITHEE

I'm staying right here with my soup.

He pulls his gun and sticks it in Amanda's side.

SMITHEE (CONT'D)

And my collateral.

Jack takes back his hand.

JACK

This does not bode well for our partnership.

There's a knock at the door. Jack motions to the bathroom. Smithee and Amanda duck inside. Jack goes to the door and opens it, to reveal Charles Lane.

LANE

The buyer is waiting. Do you have the painting?

Jack motions to the painting. Lane catches his breath. Wow.

LANE (CONT'D)

Exquisite.

JACK

If you like that, you should see the Spaghettios I've got hanging in my foyer.

They leave, Jack shooting a worried glance at the bathroom before closing the door behind him.

INT. LOBBY - NIGHT

The elevator doors open. Jack and Charles Lane stride across the lobby when Mark, dashing in his tux, walks up to Jack. Uh-oh.

MARK

Hey, shouldn't you be getting dressed? It's black-tie tonight, Jack.

JACK

Thanks for the fashion tip, pops.
But this cat can dress himself, jack.

Jacks keeps walking, Mark looking after him, confused. Lane turns to Jack.

LANE

This is one hip town. You speak an
entirely different language here.

JACK

You got that right, jack.

And on Jack's relief, we CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL BALLROOM - NIGHT

The room is packed with doctors and spouses in tuxedos and glittering evening gowns, all eating their rubber banquet chicken. Bonnie, dateless, sits at the center table, looking around the room, as, on the dais, the MC drones on.

MC

...and to give the award for Surgeon
of the Year, Dr. Mark Sloan.

APPLAUSE comes from the audience as Mark rushes in. He bounds to the front of the room to the applause of the audience. Bonnie's smile turns icy as Mark steps behind the podium and hefts the gold-plated award.

MARK

I can't tell you how much receiving
this award meant to Elliot Valin.
Unfortunately, he never got the
chance to tell you all himself. But
I know someone who can. She's the
one person who meant more to Elite
than this award -- his widow, Mrs.
Bonnie Valin.

The audience applauds as Bonnie makes her way to the podium. She reaches for the trophy, but Mark holds it out of her reach.

BONNIE

Thank you, Mark.
(to the audience)
I'm proud to have been a small part
of the legend that was Elliott Valin.

MARK

You're too modest.
(to the audience)
Bonnie was Elliott masterpiece. He
carved and sculpted her body until
(MORE)

MARK (CONT'D)
she was physically perfect. And yet,
he still wasn't satisfied.

BONNIE
He never was.

MARK
(still smiling)
So she murdered him in cold-blood,
then tricked me into proving her
innocent.

There's a stunned silence from the room, then a buzz as Mark's words penetrate. The MC steps up and tries to usher Mark away, but he won't move.

MC
I'm sure you'll all join me in a
hand of applause for the late Elliott
Valin, Surgeon of the Year!

But everyone ignores the MC, who slinks away. Bonnie tries to slip away with him, but Mark grabs her arm.

MARK
Ladies and gentlemen, I've come here
tonight to give Bonnie Valin two
honors. The first, of course, is her
late husband's award.

He gives it to her, then produces an 8x10 photograph.

MARK (CONT'D)
The second is the evidence that's
going to send her to prison for the
rest of her life.

Again, there's a gasp from the audience. Bonnie, however, is as cool as ever.

BONNIE
(low, to Mark)
I must have misread my invitation. I
thought this was an awards dinner,
not dinner theater.

MARK
(low, to Bonnie)
Just wait until you see the surprise
guest star.

Bonnie looks at him. What's he got up his sleeve? Maybe it's nothing.

BONNIE

(to the audience)

I'm sure Elliott would want us all to go on with our meals and forget about this unpleasantness.

(low, to Mark)

Just like the judge did.

MARK

Thanks to me, Bonnie can't be touched for killing her husband. But she can still be prosecuted for conspiracy, fraud, and the attempted murder of her accomplice, Dave McDonnell, the tourist who gave her her alibi.

MARK SHOWS HER

THE PHOTO a grainy shot of Dave McDonnell in a phone booth outside a convenience store.

BACK TO SCENE

Mark snatches the picture back and holds it up to the audience.

MARK

It's a bit grainy, but if you look closely, you'll see it's him.

BONNIE

Where did you get that?

MARK

You thought you'd killed Dave with the rat poison, but he's alive and on the run.

BONNIE

That's absurd.

MARK

He called the police to, if you'll pardon the pun, rat on you. They traced the call to a convenience store in New Mexico and got this picture off the security camera. He'll be in custody, begging to tell everything he knows, before you can get to the airport.

Now she is shaken. She pulls herself together.

BONNIE

I won't stand here and listen to you insult my late husband's memory one more minute.

And with that, she storms away from the podium, taking the award with her. There's a smattering of confused applause as she goes. And as Mark watches her:

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

as Jack, Lane, and Pangrazio come in. Pangrazio goes straight to the Cream of Celery painting. He stares at it with wonderment.

PANGRAZIO

Remarkable -- the way Wallengren uses color is stunning. The fluidity, the vibrancy, it's subtle power dazzles you.

JACK

I'm getting hungry just looking at it. You got the money?

Pangrazio motions to Lane, who sets a briefcase down on the coffee table.

LANE

This cat isn't browsing, jack.

Lane pops open the briefcase. Inside are stacks of cash.

PANGRAZIO

Trust me, it's all there. I don't mind paying. The Cream of Celery Soup is worth every penny.

AMANDAS VOICE

Easy for you to say...

Amanda and Smithee come out of the bathroom. Pangrazio's is stunned. Amanda goes straight to the money and snaps the briefcase closed.

AMANDA

... when you're paying with my money.

PANGRAZIO

Amanda -- I was meaning to call you. I've been working on your cash-flow problem, and good news, it's all settled. Your money is safe in the bank. This money is mine.

SMITHEE

Actually, it belongs to me.

JACK

That's right. It's what we call a transaction. You take the money. He takes the painting. You have a lot to learn about business.

That's when we see Smithee is still leveling his gun. Right at Jack.

SMITHEE

I've decided to take it all. The money and the painting.

JACK

You learn fast.

That's when the closet doors fly open and Dickerson and Mayer burst out, holding guns.

DICKERSON

Think again. FBI.

Smithee drops the gun. Pangrazio uses the distraction to grab the briefcase and bolt for the deck. Jack gives chase, Dickerson calling after him.

DICKERSON (CONT'D)

Wait -- he's not going anywhere.

Pangrazio quickly scales the rail and leaps off the DECK.

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - WIDE - NIGHT

We FOLLOW Pangrazio as he drops twelve stories into the SWIMMING POOL below with an ENORMOUS SPLASH, his BRIEFCASE BURSTING OPEN when it hits the water.

BACK TO SCENE

Jack makes a quick decision and scales the rail. Amanda yells out.

AMANDA

No!

Too late. Jack jumps. Amanda leans over the edge and sees...

EXT. OCEANFRONT HOTEL - WIDE - NIGHT

Jack tumbles, with a BANSHEE YELL, down the length of the building, PLUNGING into the DOLLAR-LITTERED pool with a huge SPLASH.

EXT. DECK - NIGHT

Amanda lets out a sigh of relief and rushes back inside.

EXT. POOL - NIGHT

Jack comes up for air and Pangrazio is on him. They fight in the water as a crowd develops around the pool. Finally, Jack DECKS Pangrazio and drags him to the rim, where two HOTEL SECURITY GUARDS pull Pangrazio out of the water. Jack is catching his breath when:

EVES VOICE

Typical.

Jack looks up to see Eve, arm-in-arm with Lloyd, looking down at him with disgust as they walk past.

EVE

You'll never change, Jack.

LLOYD

You ought to try being a bit more responsible.

They walk off. And on Jack's look, we CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

A empty, two-lane road cutting through the wooded countryside. A MERCEDES shoots past frame driving way over the speed limit.

EXT. ANOTHER COUNTRY ROAD - NIGHT

The Mercedes turns off the roadway onto an un-paved dirt road and disappears into the thick woods.

EXT. WOODED CLEARING - NIGHT

The Mercedes comes to a stop. The headlights go off. Bonnie Valin emerges from the car with a FLASHLIGHT, pops the trunk, and pulls out a SHOVEL. She gets her bearings, then marches off into the trees.

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

Bonnie finds her way through the brush to a tiny clear patch. Setting the flashlight down so it's beam is aimed at the patch, she starts to dig. The more she digs, the angrier, and more desperate she becomes, finally stopping when she hits something. Frantic, she tosses the shovel, grabs the flashlight and trains the beam in the hole.

HER POV - IN THE FLASHLIGHT BEAM

A DIRT-CRUSTED HAND pokes up from the dirt.

BACK TO SCENE

Bonnie starts laughing with relief. She's turning back for the shovel when suddenly she's bathed in light.

MARKS VOICE

Nice night for a stroll.

She holds her hands to shield her eyes. Mark and Steve step out of the trees, holding flashlights. She staggers back, shocked.

MARK

Or exhuming a corpse. Personally, I prefer a brisk walk.

BONNIE

(desperately:)
He's dead. See for yourself.

STEVE

Yes, he is. Feel better now?

She's shaking, mentally unraveling.

MARK

My guess is Dave tried to blackmail you, so you poisoned him and buried his body here.

BONNIE

But you had a picture.

He was alive. Talking to you on the phone.

MARK

That's the tricky thing about murders that aren't "messy." You can never be sure you did it right. Was he really dead or just comatose? Did he claw his way out of his shallow grave?

BONNIE

You had a picture. It was him.

MARK

I scanned Dave's yearbook photo into Elliott's computer. Then I morphed Dave's face onto a picture I took of Steve at a phone booth.

Steve takes out a pair of handcuffs and slips them on her wrists.

MARK (CONT'D)

You, of all people, should know better then to trust pictures.

She stares at him with cold, unadulterated hatred as Steve drags her away. And on Mark looking after them, we DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COMMUNITY GENERAL HOSPITAL - ESTABLISHING - DAY

INT. MARK'S OFFICE - DAY

Mark sets Elliott Valin's Surgeon of the Year award on a shelf and is standing back to admire it when there is a knock at the door.

MARK

Come in.

Someone rattles the doorknob a few times, then throws his weight against the door. It's Jack, and he's smiling from ear-to-ear.

JACK

You doorknob is sticking.

MARK

I'm glad it makes you so happy.

Mark picks up the phone, dials an extension. Jack closes the door and notices the award.

JACK

Isn't that Dr. Valin's Surgeon of the Year Award?

MARK

Yes, it is.

(into phone:)

This is Dr. Sloan. My door is sticking. Can I get someone down here to help me? Thanks.

He hangs up the phone.

MARK (CONT'D)

Bonnie Valin gave it do me. She said I'd earned it.

(then:)

You've been smiling since you came in here. Just get your teeth cleaned?

JACK

I got some very good news.

MARK

I heard: the Cream of Mushroom Soup is back in a museum, Pangrazio is in jail, Amanda has her money back, and the FBI has cleared you of any wrongdoing.

JACK

That's not it.

MARK

What could be better than that?

JACK

Eve Lurie and Lloyd Fleming ran off to Las Vegas and got married after knowing each other only two days.

MARK

Sounds pretty irresponsible to me.

JACK

(grins even more:)

Yeah.

There's a knock at the door.

MARK

Come in.

Someone jiggles the doorknob, then throws his weight against the door. It's Amanda.

AMANDA

Your doorknob is jammed.

MARK

I know. Help is on the way.

She closes the door and comes in.

AMANDA

Well, I'm all moved out of the doctor's lounge.

MARK

That's a shame. I was getting to like the decor.

AMANDA

I've got a new condo and my BMW will be delivered to me this afternoon.

(to Jack:)

And I owe it all to you.

He shrugs modestly.

JACK

What are friends for?

She suddenly steps up and gives him a big kiss.

AMANDA

Thank you, Jack.

That's when an AX splinters through the door. They turn to see the DOOR SPLINTER apart. Norman chops his way through and bursts into the room, wielding the ax like a fireman.

BRIGGS

Did someone make a desperate call for help?

Mark, Amanda and Jack break into laughter. And on Briggs looking very confused, we FADE OUT.

THE END