

CHASING LUCIFER

By

Paul Byrne

1607 Shady Side Dr
Edgewater, MD 21037

410)956-2463
paul.byrne@hocmc.org

CHASING LUCIFER

FADE IN:

INT. WEST VIRGINIA - PICKUP - DAY (SEPTEMBER 1, 2001)

MOIRA "SHANNY" SHANAHAN, 35, angelic face but struts like a vamp, snoozes with her Tony Lamas kicked up on the dash.

An engine WHINES like a tortured animal.

It jolts Shanny out of a deep sleep.

EXT. CAMPGROUND

A BIG MAN with beefy arms lifts the hood to a dented Winnebago. A tricked-out pickup eases up. Shanny hops out.

SHANNY

Need a jump?

The big man looks at Shanny suspiciously, then nods. Shanny tosses him jumper cables from her flatbed. When the man turns his back, Shanny sneaks a peek inside the rusty motor home. Glimpses a young BOY who is asleep.

SHANNY

Ya heading back to Maryland?

The big man pulls his head out of the engine. He glares at Shanny.

BIG MAN

Who says I'm from Maryland?

SHANNY

(points)

I noticed your plates.

The man ignores the question.

Resumes hooking up the jumper cables.

Shanny slaps a handcuff on the big man's wrist.

Clamps the other to the radiator hose.

BIG MAN

What the f --

Shanny flashes her I.D.

SHANNY

P-I, pal. You violated your
custody agreement.

The big man jerks the radiator hose out of the engine.

Swings a huge fist at Shanny.

Shanny ducks.

She torques a spinning kick -- knocks the man out cold.

BOY (O.S.)

Daddy!

The young boy vaults out of the camper.

Shanny scoops up the kid.

SHANNY

It's okay. Your mom sent me.

BOY

No! I wanna stay with my dad!

Shanny stuffs the unruly kid in her pickup and PEELS OUT.

INT. WASHINGTON D.C. - BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

Sucking down a beer, Shanny sits in the dark. Hot jazz
PLAYS on a stereo. VIVIAN, 40, a Hong Kong beauty by
way of Oxford, sweeps through the front door in a
tailored blouse and skirt. She kisses Shanny on the lips.

VIVIAN

Forget to pay the light bill?

Vivian switches on a lamp. Settles into a rattan arm
chair. She kicks off her Nine Wests.

VIVIAN

You wouldn't believe the day I
had.

She swipes the long neck out of Shanny's hand. Takes a
swig.

VIVIAN
Congresswoman Santore. The
one I work for? She got into
a row with the congressman
from Alabama over a proposed
tax bill.

Vivian takes another hit of beer.

VIVIAN
The Capitol Police had to
break them up.

Vivian picks up on Shanny's sullen mood. Moves to the
couch beside Shanny.

VIVIAN
What's the matter, love?

SHANNY
Three days ago, a man in
Baltimore kidnapped his son
from school. His ex... the
boy's mother... she hired me
to find them.

Shanny steals back her Michelob. Finishes what's left.

SHANNY
I tracked them down to a
campground in West Virginia.

She looks at Vivian with tired eyes.

SHANNY
I yanked the distributor cap
from their Winnebago. I
knocked out the father.
Grabbed the boy who fought me
the whole way home.

Wearily, Shanny runs her fingers through her spiked
red hair.

SHANNY
Coming back on eighty-one, the
kid tells me his mom beats him
on a steady basis. One time
she hit him so hard, she
ruptured his eardrum.

Shanny rests her head on Vivian's shoulder.

SHANNY

I handed the boy over to
Family Services. Now the kid
ain't got a mom or a dad.

BEDROOM - NEXT DAY (SEPTEMBER 2, 2001)

Shanny and Vivian snuggle in bed. A cell phone SOUNDS
OFF with an Irish jig. Vivian awakens. Nudges Shanny.

VIVIAN

Moira, love, it's your cell.

Shanny dangles out of bed. Sweeps her hand across a
throw rug. She locates her musical jeans.

SHANNY

(into the cell phone)

Yeah?
Uh-huh.

Shanny rubs the sleep out of her eyes.

SHANNY

Cops do an investigation?

She grabs a pen and pad off the nightstand.

SHANNY

What's your name?

Shanny scribbles something on the notepad.

SHANNY

You know Club Fifty-Five?

She squints at her watch.

SHANNY

Someone will meet you at three.

Shanny dumps the cell phone. Vivian strokes her
underneath the sheets.

VIVIAN

You're not working on a Saturday, are you? I thought we could spend the day in Georgetown.

Vivian sits up. Her almond eyes brighten.

VIVIAN

I hear they have a new chef at the Rive Gauche. His lamb au poivre is supposed to be tres magnifique.

Shanny caresses Vivian's delicate face.

SHANNY

It jumpstarts my engine when you speak French.

Shanny revs up Vivian with an open mouth kiss.

SHANNY

Well, since I can't swing lunch...

A sexy grin crosses Shanny's freckled face.

SHANNY

... how about breakfast in bed?

Shanny and Vivian get busy between the sheets.

INT. NIGHT CLUB - DAY

Burlesque strippers shimmy on stage before a raucous audience. REZA KADIVAR, 45, a soft spoken gent partial to Brooks Brothers, surveils the crowd from a corner table. Shanny swaggers up.

SHANNY

Doctor Caviar?

REZA

It's Kadivar.

Shanny straddles a chair.

SHANNY
Moirá Shanahan. Shamrock
Detective Agency.

REZA
I was expecting --

SHANNY
A man? Most of my clients do.

Reza drops a couple of bucks on the table and stands.

REZA
I don't think --

SHANNY
I solve ninety-three percent
of my cases. That's better
than Pinkerton or Global.
Plus I charge about half what
the big boys do.

Shanny flags down a waitress.

SHANNY
So, we going to bed together?

REZA
Beg your pardon?

SHANNY
You hiring me or what?

Reza gives Shanny the once-over.

REZA
I'll give you one day.

SHANNY
Gee, no pressure there.

Reza sits down. A waitress in a hot pink teddy swings
up.

SHANNY
Jack on-the-rocks and...

Shanny sniffs Reza's glass. Makes a face.

SHANNY
... Seven-Up?

REZA

Diet.

Shanny ogles the curvaceous waitress as she sashays off.

REZA

Out of all the people here,
how did you know I was the one
who telephoned you?

SHANNY

'Cause you're the only guy who
ain't gawking at the T and A.

Shanny's wandering eye follows another buxom waitress.

SHANNY

That either makes you gay...

Turns back to Reza.

SHANNY

... or you're here to take of
business.

REZA

(beat)

Four days ago, my mother was
found stabbed to death in her
Northeast row house. There
were no clues. No
eyewitnesses.

The tone in Reza's voice turns hopeless.

REZA

No obvious motive.

SHANNY

F-Y-I. Most of the homicide
dicks in this town got cobwebs
growing on 'em.

The jiggly waitress returns with the drinks. Shanny
takes a snort of her Jack Daniels.

SHANNY

Did the cops question anyone?

REZA

The police interviewed the two
borders --

SHANNY

Borders?

REZA

My mother supplemented her
retirement income by renting
rooms in her house.

Reza tastes his fresh diet soda.

SHANNY

So tell me about the borders.

REZA

One was a seventy-two-year-old
man who required a walker.
The other was a deaf mute who
was working on her masters at
Gallaudet.

SHANNY

Not exactly what you call
prime suspects.

Shanny sits back. Notices how Reza's preppie duds look
out of place amidst the sleazy barflies.

SHANNY

You said there were no eye
witnesses. Did the neighbors
notice anything odd the night
of the murder?

REZA

Odd?

SHANNY

Yeah, you know. Like a Hari
Krishna strolling down the
middle of the road strumming a
banjo.

Reza strokes his trimmed goatee as he jogs his memory.

REZA

The man across the street. He told police he saw a black sports car parked outside my mother's that night.

SHANNY

Did he get a plate?
Description of the driver?

Reza shakes his head.

SHANNY

You know I've gotten more info looking for a lost dog. Got a pen?

Reza withdraws a fountain pen from his cashmere sport coat. Extends it to Shanny.

SHANNY

What was your old lady's name?

REZA

Massoumeh Kadivar.

Shanny rolls her eyes.

SHANNY

It's spelled just like it sounds, right?

She jots something down on a cocktail napkin.

SHANNY

Address?

REZA

Nineteen-thirty-eight Taylor Street Northeast.

SHANNY

That's by Providence Hospital.

REZA

Correct. My mother was employed as a secretary there for over twenty years.

SHANNY

Where can I reach you?

Reza slides out a business card from a silver case.

REZA

May I?

Shanny returns Reza's fancy pen.

REZA

I'm staying at the Willard.

Reza writes something on the back of his business card.

REZA

My room and telephone number
are on the back.

He passes the card to Shanny.

SHANNY

I'll be in touch.

A voluptuous stripper shakes out a fan dance on stage.
Shanny walks up. Crams a ten spot in her G-string.

SHANNY

Keep up the good work, toots.

Shanny struts out of the club.

EXT. ROW HOUSE - NIGHT

A switchblade slices apart yellow police tape. A car's
headlights sweep across Shanny crouching on the porch.
Changing to a lockpick, Shanny jimmys open the front
door.

INT. ROW HOUSE

The cozy home is furnished in Middle Eastern decor.
Shanny locates a framed photo on a piano.

INSERT - PHOTO

Smiling in a cap and gown, Reza hugs his mother on
graduation day.

GUEST BEDROOM

A beam from a pen flashlight focuses on deep scratches marking the hardwood floor. Shanny takes aim with her cell phone.

SHANNY

Say cheese...

She snaps a picture. Shanny does a double take. Notices a matchbook wedged beneath the leg of a rickety four-poster. Shanny twists it free and bags it.

INSERT - MATCHBOOK

The cover reads: "PASHA'S ORIENTAL RUGS".

INT. HOTEL - HALLWAY - DAY (SEPTEMBER 3, 2001)

Shanny raps on a door. Soaking wet, Reza opens up. Ties the belt on his terry cloth robe.

REZA

You're up awfully early.

SHANNY

It's easy when you haven't been to bed.

HOTEL SUITE

Shanny checks out the posh accommodations. Reza straightens up a little.

SHANNY

This beats the hell out of a Red Roof.

Shanny spots a laptop.

SHANNY

So what kind of law do ya teach, doc?

REZA

How did you know --

Shanny waves the business card Reza gave her.

REZA

I teach criminal law at the University of Minnesota. My doctorate, though, is in Sociology.

Shanny makes herself comfortable in an upholstered chair.

SHANNY

You can afford a luxury suite on a professor's paycheck?

REZA

I also write books. Two of them have been published.

Reza segues to the wet bar.

REZA

Coffee?

Shanny shakes her head.

SHANNY

Either one make the best-seller list?

REZA

Hardly.

Reza pours a cup of coffee at the wet bar.

REZA

My first published work was a compilation of legal decisions by Thurgood Marshall.

He creams and sugars his coffee.

REZA

The other was a biography of John G Roberts.

SHANNY

Civil rights advocacy and judicial minimalism. You cover both ends of the street.

REZA

I'm impressed.

SHANNY

Don't get excited. I used to date a law clerk.

Reza sips his steaming coffee.

REZA

Conservative or libertarian, I believe one can learn from every human being.

SHANNY

You've obviously never ridden the New York subway.

REZA

Is that where you're originally from?

SHANNY

Yo, and yous got a problem wit dat?

Reza politely smiles at Shanny's Brooklynese.

REZA

Has your investigation turned up anything?

SHANNY

Did you know your mom was tortured before she was killed?

REZA

Tortured?

Shanny extracts a folded piece of paper from her leather vest.

SHANNY

Copy of the coroner's report.

Shanny reads it.

SHANNY

Multiple knife wounds to the upper and lower extremities. Cause of death...

She looks up at Reza.

SHANNY

... hypovolemic shock due to massive blood loss.

Shanny hands the report to Reza.

SHANNY

The slimeball who off'd your mom took his time.

REZA

That doesn't make any sense. Why would anyone want to murder my mother in such a barbaric way?

SHANNY

The cops report nothing was ripped off. The M-E says your mom wasn't sexually assaulted.

Shanny strolls over to the window. Tries out the view of downtown D.C.

SHANNY

Unless we're dealing with a serial, which I don't think we are, that leaves only one thing the killer wanted.

REZA

And what would that be?

Shanny turns back to Reza.

SHANNY

Information.

REZA

What could my mother have possibly known that would have gotten her killed?

SHANNY

That's the ten million dollar question.

Shanny leans against the window sill.

SHANNY

I scoped out the guest bedrooms. I found something interesting in one of them.

Reza throws up his hand. Halts the conversation.

REZA

How did you gain entrance to my mother's house without a key?

SHANNY

I dug a tunnel.

Shanny retrieves a snapshot from her skin tight jeans. Forks it over to Reza.

SHANNY

Those scratches underneath the bed are fresh. It means whoever your mom rented that room to --

REZA

Are you inferring one of the borders --

SHANNY

The Gallaudet student had only stayed in that room for two days. Prior to her, a foreign guy driving a -- guess what?

REZA

A black sports car?

SHANNY

He had rented the same room.

Reza studies the snapshot.

REZA

So what's the importance of these scratches on the floor?

SHANNY

It tells me somebody had something they were trying to keep out of sight.

Shanny produces a pack of matches.

SHANNY

I also came across this.

Shanny deposits it in Reza's hand.

SHANNY

A buddy of mine works in Forensics. He dusted it for prints, but they were too smudged to get an I-D.

Reza's eyes glance the cover.

REZA

Pasha's Oriental Rugs. I don't understand. What's the significance?

SHANNY

I didn't see any ashtrays in the house. I thought it could be a lead.

Shanny bellies up to the wet bar. Mixes a vodka and O.J.

SHANNY

My rate's two hundred a day, plus beer and pretzel money. You can settle up for one day or you can pay me a retainer.

With a serious expression, Reza walks over to Shanny. Looks her dead in the eye.

REZA

You're hired, Ms. Shanahan.

SHANNY

Call me Shanny.

The two shake hands.

HOTEL SUITE - LATER

Reza pushes away from his laptop. Hits the speed dial on his cell phone.

REZA

Hi honey, it's me.
Yes, I'm still in D-C.
No, the police haven't
arrested anyone.

Reza holds up the matchbook Shanny found at the crime scene.

REZA

In fact, I've hired a private
investigator. She's already
discovered evidence the police
overlooked.
Yes, she's a woman.

Reza resumes typing on his laptop.

REZA

I've informed the dean I
need a few more days.
Meanwhile, I've been grading
papers online.

Reza stops typing. Focuses on the conversation.

REZA

I have to do this, Joanna. I
have to find out who murdered
my mother.
I love you too.

He hangs up.

EXT. CHINATOWN - STREET CORNER - DAY

Shanny and an Asian street performer juggle bowling pins to each other. A black Audi ZOOMS UP.

Shanny observes QUSAY, 50, has a serpent's eyes that would scare the devil himself, stepping out. Qusay hurries into a rug store.

SHANNY
(to the street performer)
Catch ya later, Lenny.

Shanny feeds him her bowling pins. The street performer juggles all four.

INT. RUG STORE - DAY

Camel bells tied to the front door CLANG. Shanny wanders in. PASHA, unwashed, but dripping in gold, pokes his bald head through a beaded curtain.

PASHA
Welcome to Pasha's! I'll be
with you in a moment!

The store owner disappears behind the ornate beads.

BACK ROOM

Shanny's baby blues peer in. She spies Qusay and Pasha stacking cash in a briefcase. The camel bells RING again. Quickly, Shanny peels away.

SHOW ROOM

Pasha throws open the beaded curtains. Sees a couple perusing his wares.

PASHA
All rugs! Half-priced!

Qusay bolts from the back room. He hustles out of the store clutching the briefcase.

PASHA
(to Shanny)
Have you made a decision?

SHANNY
Yeah, I'm going with linoleum.

Shanny splits. Leaves Pasha with a curious look.

EXT. RUG STORE - DAY

Shanny jumps in her pickup. Tails Qusay who SPEEDS OFF in the black sports coupe.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Sitting cross-leg on the bed, Shanny deals out surveillance photos of Qusay to Reza.

SHANNY

He's registered at a Fourteenth Street roach motel as Pablo Ramirez. I tailed him from an oriental rug shop in Chinatown.

REZA

The same one as the matchbook cover?

Shanny nods.

REZA

What does this man have to do with my mother's murder?

SHANNY

Maybe nothing, but there's a couple of things hinky about this joker.

Shanny unwraps a stick of bubble gum. Chews it.

SHANNY

For the minute and a half Senor Ramirez was in the carpet shop, he went into a back room and came out with a briefcase full of dough.

Shanny blows a bubble and pops it.

SHANNY

Notice anything about this guy's whip?

REZA

His what?

SHANNY

His ride.

Reza zones in on one of the pictures.

REZA

It's a black sports car.

SHANNY

It's an Audi R-eight. Could be the same one the neighbor spotted the night of the murder.

Shanny takes the photo from Reza. She scrutinizes it.

SHANNY

Why would a dude tooling around in a hundred and twenty K Euro rod rent a room at the Bates motel?

Shanny pulls out an iPod.

REZA

What's that for?

SHANNY

I want you to hear something. It's a recording of Ramirez making a call from his motel room.

Shanny cues up the iPod.

REZA

How did you acquire it?

SHANNY

I slipped the motel clerk a C-note.

REZA

You bugged the motel room?

SHANNY

Not the entire room. Just his
phone.

Reza prevents Shanny from playing the recording.

REZA

That's illegal.

Shanny looks around suspiciously.

SHANNY

I won't tell anyone if you
don't.

Shanny presses a button on her iPod. A recorded
telephone conversation PLAYS.

REZA

They're conversing in Arabic.

SHANNY

I knew it wasn't Espanol.

REZA

One of the men identifies
himself as Qusay. He's
telling the other he has the
money.

SHANNY

That's Ramirez.

Reza brings the iPod closer to his ear.

REZA

Ramirez... I mean Qusay. He's
stating that he's still
looking for the parcel...

Reza shakes his head.

... no, the suitcase.

SHANNY

Suitcase, huh?

Qusay's recorded VOICE rises dramatically.

SHANNY

This is where things heat up.

REZA

Qusay says he knows time is running out.

The recording abruptly ends with the SOUND of a hang up. Shanny walks over to the window. Gazes at the stream of headlights downtown.

REZA

What are you thinking?

SHANNY

Remember that picture of the border's room? The one with the scratches beneath the bed?

REZA

Of course.

SHANNY

Those scratches could've been made by a suitcase. Possibly the same suitcase this Qusay is trying to hunt down.

Reza ejects off the bed.

Wheels Shanny around to face him.

REZA

What are you implying? That my mother stole --

SHANNY

No, that's not what I'm --

REZA

You don't even know if this... Qusay was a border at my mother's house.

SHANNY

Geez Louise, will ya pipe down a minute?

Reza releases Shanny. She takes a deep breath.

SHANNY

Let's say for one lousy minute,
Qusay had stayed at your mom's.
Let's also say he had at least
one suitcase. For whatever
reason, your mom did something
with that suitcase.

REZA

That's preposterous! Why
would my mother --

SHANNY

I don't know!
(beat; calmer)
Maybe your mom was afraid of
what was in the suitcase?

REZA

Afraid? What are you talking
about?

Shanny needs space from Reza. She paces the luxury
suite.

SHANNY

Cops said your mom changed the
locks on her house two days
before she was murdered.
Correct?

REZA

Yes, I believe so.

Shanny stops. Scratches her chin thoughtfully.

SHANNY

Roll this one around.

Shanny resumes pacing.

SHANNY

One day, your mom's cleaning
the border's room. Qusay's
room. She discovers the
suitcase.

Shanny looks at Reza.

SHANNY

Your mom's a little curious.
She takes a peek inside.

Shanny chews her bubblegum pensively.

SHANNY

Maybe it's heroin. Maybe it's
guns. Whatever. Your mom
doesn't want it in her crib.

REZA

If that were the case, my
mother would've ordered Qusay
out of her house.

SHANNY

Maybe she did. Maybe Qusay
threatened her.

Shanny throws up her arms in frustration.

SHANNY

I'm just spitballing here!

Shanny sits on the edge of the bed.

SHANNY

Your mom gets rid of the
suitcase. She changes the
locks to the house while
Qusay's out.

She gnaws her gum excitedly.

SHANNY

A couple of nights later,
Qusay breaks into your mom's.
He can't find the suitcase.
Qusay tortures your mother.
He kills her.

REZA

My God.

SHANNY

Exactly.

REZA

You have to go to the police
with this.

Shanny shakes her head.

REZA

Why not? You have the recording of Qusay's phone call. The photographs of the bedroom. The matchbook cover.

SHANNY

You said it yourself. The tap on Qusay's phone was illegal. Therefore, inadmissable.

Shanny packs up the photos and her iPod into a gym bag.

SHANNY

The other stuff is so circumstantial, the cops would laugh me right out of the station.

Shanny holds up the gym bag.

SHANNY

I need more than this to convince the cops. I need hard evidence linking Qusay one hundred percent to your old lady's murder.

REZA

You need to find the suitcase.

SHANNY

Before Qusay does.

INT. ROADHOUSE - NIGHT

Southern Rock WALLS on a jukebox. Qusay walks in gripping a briefcase. He bumps into a REDNECK.

REDNECK

(under his breath)
Dumb camel jockey.

Qusay snares the man by the arm.

QUSAY

Did you say something?

REDNECK

Yeah, ya dumb fuckin' --

Qusay's elbow smashes the redneck in the face.

Blood gushes down his plaid shirt.

REDNECK

Ya broke my fuckin' nose!

QUSAY

One day, you will respect my
people.

Qusay swaggers past bikers and wannabe cowboys. Stares
each one of them down. Qusay slides into a booth
opposite a GREASER with a gold tooth grin.

GREASER

Most foreigners I know
wouldn't step one inch into
this hillbilly hellhole.

The greaser watches the redneck with the bloody nose
vacate the bar.

GREASER

You walk in like you just
bought the joint.

QUSAY

That's because I fear no man.
Only Allah.

Qusay rotates the briefcase to face the greaser. He
pops it open. Inside are neat rows of Andrew Jacksons.

QUSAY

Twenty thousand. As agreed.

The greaser fans one of the stacks of money next to his
ear.

GREASER

It's better than hearing a
woman cum.

Qusay slams the briefcase lid on the greaser's knuckles.

His eyes well up with tears.

QUSAY

What will be on the plane?

GREASER

Five box cutters and two
K-bars.

The greaser lowers his head in pain.

GREASER

They'll be stashed underneath
your assigned seats.

QUSAY

Make sure they are.

Qusay stands. Leans his full body weight on top of the
briefcase. The greaser cries out.

QUSAY

Otherwise, you will curse the
day we met.

Qusay struts his stuff on the way out.

EXT. ROW HOUSE - DAY (SEPTEMBER 4, 2001)

A Cadillac bearing a realty logo sails up. Reza and a
highfalutin REALTOR step out. She eyes the damaged
entrance.

REALTOR

That front door will have to
go.

REZA

The police had to kick it in.

REALTOR

The police?

REZA

My mother was stabbed to death.

REALTOR

We'll leave that out of the
advertising.

Working a Palm Pilot, the realtor walks around to the back of the house.

EXT. BACK YARD

The realtor stumbles upon Shanny digging up a flower bed.

REALTOR
(calls out to Reza)
Your gardener is here!

REZA
My what?

Reza sees Shanny on all fours.

REZA
What are you doing?

SHANNY
Looking for Davy Jones' locker.

Shanny gestures to the realtor.

SHANNY
Who's the broad?

REALTOR
I beg your pardon.

Reza positions himself between the two women.

REZA
This is the realtor who is listing the house.

SHANNY
(snorts)
I wouldn't let her sell my bird feeder.

REALTOR
Doctor Caviar --

REZA
The name is Kadivar.

REALTOR
I will not stand here and be insulted.

The realtor looks down her nose at Shanny.

REALTOR

Particularly by the hired help.

Shanny leaps to her feet.

Her fists are clenched.

Reza cuts her off.

REZA

(to the realtor)

I'll call you.

The realtor leaves in a snit.

REZA

What's all this about?

SHANNY

I tossed your mom's place.
There was no sign of a
suitcase.

Shanny stabs the shovel in a mound of earth.

SHANNY

After casing the tool shed, I
noticed the dirt in the flower
bed had been recently turned.

Shanny brushes the soil from her jeans.

SHANNY

I started digging.

REZA

Did you find anything?

SHANNY

Couple of steak bones the
local bow-wows had buried.

REZA

Perhaps you're not digging
deep enough.

Shanny yanks the shovel out of the ground.

SHANNY

You wanna put your muscle
where your mouth is?

Shanny foists the shovel on Reza. Dumbstruck, Reza pushes up his shirt sleeves and commences digging.

INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY

The front door swings open. Shanny tracks mud across the white berber.

SHANNY

That was a big fat waste of
time.

Shanny turns around. Observes Reza tiptoeing with his soiled shoes in his hand.

SHANNY

What are you doing?

REZA

I'm trying not to dirty your
carpet.

SHANNY

That's what a wet-vac is for.

Shanny throws open the fridge. Pops the top to a beer.

SHANNY

Wanna brew?

Reza mounts a stool at the breakfast bar.

REZA

I'm Moslem. We don't drink.

SHANNY

I'm Irish Catholic. We do.

Shanny takes a belt. Lobs a bottled water at Reza. The front door opens again. This time Vivian enters. She stops short. Eyes the muddy trail of shoe prints.

VIVIAN

Boots, Shanny!

Reza stares at Shanny with an "I Told You So" look.

SHANNY

Don't go there.
(to Vivian)
Hey, sugar.

Shanny plants one on Vivian's kisser. Shocked, Reza diverts his eyes.

SHANNY

Whassup?

VIVIAN

The subcommittee adjourned
early.

Vivian sizes up Shanny and Reza glowing with perspiration.

VIVIAN

And how did you two get hot
and sweaty?

SHANNY

We ran laps around the White
House.
(motions to Reza)
Reza Caviar...

REZA

It's pronounced, Kadivar.

SHANNY

... Vivian Chen.

Vivian extends a manicured hand to Reza.

VIVIAN

Nice to meet you.

Vivian and Reza shake hands.

VIVIAN

Will you be staying for dinner?

REZA

Thank you, but--

SHANNY
C'mon, that room service has
gotta be getting old.

REZA
Well actually --

SHANNY
He's staying.

Vivian slips off her designer jacket.

VIVIAN
Fabulous. I'll change.

Vivian disappears into the bedroom.

SHANNY
You can scrape your jaw off
the ground.

REZA
Sorry?

Shanny sidles up to the breakfast bar.

SHANNY
The purple pickup and the Joan
Jett wardrobe didn't clue you
in?

REZA
I'm not following.

SHANNY
I'm gay.

REZA
Honestly, I never --

SHANNY
You gotta get out of Montana
more often.

REZA
It's Minnesota.

SHANNY
Whatever.

BROWNSTONE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Shanny, Reza and Vivian dig into a gourmet meal.

REZA

These seafood crepes are
delicious.

SHANNY

They're Vivian's specialty.
She studied at the Cordon Bleu
in Paris.

REZA

Really?
(to Vivian)
Why haven't you opened your
own restaurant?

VIVIAN

Because I gained forty pounds
learning how to cook like this.

Vivian daintily dabs her mouth with a linen napkin.

VIVIAN

What part of the Middle East
are you from?

REZA

Iran. My mother and I moved
to Washington when I was
twelve.

VIVIAN

Why did you leave your country?

REZA

That's a long story.

Shanny pops out of her chair.

SHANNY

In that case, more wine.

Shanny tops off the wine goblets.

REZA

My father was a professor of philosophy at Tehran University. He was imprisoned under Shah for his quote, leftist teachings.

Reza sips his water.

REZA

When Ayatollah assumed power in seventy-nine, my father was appointed to the Advisory Council for the Cultural Revolution.

Reza pensively swirls the ice in his glass.

REZA

My father spoke out against Islamic extremists who were gaining control of the new Iranian government.

A sadness appears in Reza's eyes.

REZA

My father was arrested again. This time by religious zealots.

VIVIAN

What happened?

REZA

My father was tortured for twenty-three days.

Reza's eyes drift to a print of Edvard Munch's "THE SCREAM" hanging on the wall.

REZA

During his final interrogation, my father suffered a stroke.

(beat)

He was left alone in his prison cell to die.

VIVIAN

I'm so sorry.

SHANNY

Is that when you and your mom
hightailed it to the West?

Reza steadies himself with a gulp of water.

REZA

My mother gathered all the
money she had and paid drug
smugglers to get us out of
Iran.

He leans forward.

REZA

We posed as missionaries. We
traveled hundreds of miles
through Afghanistan where war
raged between mujahideen and
the Soviet Army.

Reza's eyes take on a faraway look.

REZA

Many times we had to outrun
machine-gun fire. R-P-Gs.

The danger in his eyes subsides.

REZA

Thirteen days later, we
reached Islamabad. It was
there my mother appealed for
asylum at the American embassy.

Shanny knocks back the rest of her wine.

SHANNY

And I thought I had a rough
childhood.

INT. PICKUP - NIGHT

Shanny takes her eyes off the road. Snaps her fingers
at Reza.

SHANNY

Earth to Reza.

Reza stares at the neon-lit stores passing outside his window.

REZA

I was thinking... maybe this Qusay didn't murder my mother. Maybe there was no suitcase after all.

Reza glimpses a weird panhandler hanging out on a streetcorner.

REZA

Maybe we're pursuing the wrong person.

Reza turns his gaze toward Shanny.

REZA

Suppose --

SHANNY

Suppose the mothership landed that night and little space men from Planet Nine invaded your old lady's pad.

Shanny angrily chomps her bubblegum.

SHANNY

Rule number one, Doc. Always follow the evidence.

REZA

Where do we go from here?

Shanny steers her pickup in front of the Willard.

SHANNY

We? You got a mouse in your pocket?

REZA

What I meant --

SHANNY

I ain't digging up anymore flower beds if that's what you're getting at?

A doorman opens the passenger door. Looking dejected, Reza steps out.

SHANNY

Hey.

Reza looks back at Shanny.

SHANNY

If you really wanna ride
shotgun...

Reza perks up like a puppy who was fed a treat.

REZA

I can be ready by six a-m.

SHANNY

Good for you. I'll pick you
up at eight.

The passenger door slams shut. Shanny FLOORS IT.

INT. CAFE - DAY (SEPTEMBER 5, 2001)

Speaking in Arabic, Qusay and an OLD SYRIAN play chess at a table near the kitchen.

OLD SYRIAN

I fought the Israelis in sixty-
nine...

He sips his cardamon tea.

OLD SYRIAN

... and again in seventy-three.
What did it change? Nothing.

Qusay leans close to the old man.

QUSAY

What if I told you there is a
plan to bring the great infidel
to its knees?

OLD SYRIAN

Meaning America?

Qusay nods. The old man looks skeptical.

OLD SYRIAN
What have you heard?

Qusay scans the cafe for eavesdroppers.

QUSAY
Suppose a commercial aircraft
flying over a major U-S city
purposely crashed?

He turns back to the old Syrian.

QUSAY
And aboard this aircraft there
was a nuclear bomb.

OLD SYRIAN
That's madness.

QUSAY
Is it?

Qusay drinks the strong tea from a demitasse cup.

QUSAY
Was it madness when the
Americans dropped atomic bombs
on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Qusay advances his bishop on the chessboard.

OLD SYRIAN
I have never agreed with the
murder of innocent people.

QUSAY
In the struggle between good
and evil, innocence is
irrelevant.

The old man stares at Qusay. Tries to penetrate his dark sunglasses.

OLD SYRIAN
Genocide, my brother, is not
the answer.

QUSAY

Are you content to stand idle
while the sacred teachings of
Allah are systematically
eroded?

Qusay picks up a pawn off the game board. Rolls it
between his fingers.

QUSAY

Every day, followers of Islam
are polluted with messages of
Western immorality through
satellites, the internet, T-V.

Qusay sits back. Assesses the old man's reaction.

QUSAY

The Koran calls the faithful
to protect Islam against those
who seek to destroy it.

The old Syrian defends his King with a rook.

OLD SYRIAN

The Koran also teaches Moslems
to be honorable and just.

QUSAY

How honorable and just will
you be when the great infidel
has wiped Islam from the face
of the earth and replaced it
with Babylon?

Qusay checkmates the old man. Gets up to leave. The
old Syrian grasps his arm.

OLD SYRIAN

This plan you spoke of. Does
it truly exist?

Qusay flashes an evil grin. Walks out of the cafe.

INT. PICKUP - DAY

Riding with the windows down, Shanny and Reza cruise
D.C. on a hot, sticky day.

SHANNY

We checked out the two places
your old lady frequented.
The mosque and the senior
center. Still no suitcase.

Shanny snaps her bubblegum.

SHANNY

Anywhere else your mom
coulda used as a hiding
place?

Driving by the Potomac River, Reza eyes the choppy
water.

REZA

When I was a child in Iran, my
father kept a gun in the house.
A Russian Makarov.

Reza diverts his attention to Shanny.

REZA

One day, my brother Farzad
found my father's revolver.
He accidentally shot himself
in the head.

(beat)

My brother was only five years
old.

Reza glances back at the Potomac.

REZA

My mother was so upset, she
carried my father's gun to a
nearby lake and threw it as
far as she could.

SHANNY

You saying your mom tossed the
suitcase in the Potomac?

REZA

Somewhere else. Somewhere we
visited many times.

Shanny jerks the truck onto the shoulder of the road.
She fires an angry look at Reza.

SHANNY

You gonna tell me where this
somewhere is or do I have to
wait for your next book to be
published?

REZA

When we first moved to
Washington, my mother used to
take me to the Ellipse to play.

Shanny pounds her fist on the steering wheel.

SHANNY

The Reflecting Pool!

EXT. THE REFLECTING POOL - DAY

With their pant legs rolled up, Shanny and Reza trawl
the knee-deep water. An elderly couple strolls by for a
curious look.

SHANNY

(to the elderly couple)

We lost our frisbee.

(to Reza)

We've been wading around for
half an hour and so far we've
found a baseball, a
screwdriver, four hubcaps
and a ...

Wielding a stick, Shanny raises something from the murky
water.

SHANNY

... a jockstrap.

REZA

I really thought --

Suddenly, Reza splashes face first in the water. Shanny
hauls him up.

SHANNY

Are you all right?

REZA

I tripped.

SHANNY

No shit.

Shanny pokes at something big under the water. Slowly she dredges up a bulging burlap sack. With Reza's help, Shanny heaves it onto the grass.

REZA

What is it?

SHANNY

With our luck, somebody's ex-wife.

EXT. ELLIPSE

Shanny and Reza drain the water out of the sack. Out slides an aluminum-plated suitcase.

SHANNY

Jackpot!

A pair of Park Police trot over on horseback.

SHANNY

Cops!

Shanny grabs the suitcase. Reza grabs their shoes. The two scurry off barefoot.

EXT. ALLEY - NIGHT

Still damp, Shanny and Reza climb out of the pickup with the suitcase.

REZA

Who is this gentleman?

SHANNY

First and foremost, Nicky's no gentleman. He's the number one fence in the city.

Shanny walks around a drunkard passed out in a doorway.

SHANNY

Nicky moves everything from diamond tiaras to flame throwers.

A HOMELESS MAN steps out from behind a dumpster.

HOMELESS MAN
Gimme your wallets... and the
suitcase.

The drunkard jumps Reza from behind.

The homeless man swipes at Shanny with a steel shank.

Shanny whacks him with the metal suitcase.

Knocks him out flat.

SHANNY
Yo! Asshole!

The drunkard spins around fist first.

Shanny dives deep.

She comes up swinging.

Pummels the drunkard into submission.

REZA
Where did you learn to fight
like that?

SHANNY
The clearance sale at Macy's.

Shanny helps Reza off the pavement.

INT. PAWNSHOP - NIGHT

Lugging the suitcase, Shanny and Reza straggle in.
NICKY, 60, constantly gnaws a half-smoked cigar, tinkers
with a boom box behind a bulletproof glass.

NICKY
Hey Shanny! Long time, no
bullshit!

SHANNY
Ya ever think about moving to
a safer barrio?

NICKY

Ya ever think about wearing a dress?

Nicky reaches underneath the counter. A BUZZER sounds. The barred door UNLOCKS automatically.

NICKY

Just you, Shanny.

SHANNY

(to Reza)

Don't buy anything.
Ninety-nine percent of the merch in here is hot.

Shanny passes through the secured doorway.

BACK ROOM

Chubby fingers pull a cord hanging from the ceiling. A naked lightbulb comes to life. Assault rifles. Rocket launchers. They line the walls in wooden racks. Shanny places the suitcase on a battered table.

SHANNY

(to Nicky)

I wanna know what's inside.

Nicky gives the suitcase the once-over.

NICKY

Check it for booby traps?

Shanny shakes her head. Nicky slips on his bifocals. Runs a thin strip of plastic between the seams of the suitcase.

NICKY

So far, so good.

Nicky flips the suitcase around. Checks it from different angles.

NICKY

No keylock. No combo.

Nicky twists the handle to the right. Then to the left. The handle swings free exposing a thin slot.

SHANNY

Damn. It's like something
outta James Bond.

Nicky withdraws a black metal box from a drawer. He pushes a red button. A plain white access card ejects out.

SHANNY

What's that?

NICKY

It's a reader card. Think of
it as a high-tech lockpick.

Nicky carefully slides the reader card into the slot. A few seconds pass. The suitcase pops open.

SHANNY

Cool. Can you do that with an
A-T-M machine?

Slowly, Nicky opens the suitcase all the way. His beady eyes double in size.

NICKY

Jesus C Christ. I thought
these things were an urban
legend.

SHANNY

C'mon Nicky. You're killing
me here with the suspense.

Nicky spins the suitcase around to face Shanny. Inside are an array of switches and dials labeled with Cyrillic letters.

NICKY

This, my friend, is a nuclear
bomb.

Shanny jumps back.

SHANNY

Are you shittin' me?

NICKY

It ain't live. You need an
arming code to activate it.

Nicky runs his sausage-like fingers across the control panel.

NICKY

Where did you find this little beauty?

Shanny stonewalls the question.

NICKY

No problem. I can be discrete.

Hesitantly Shanny takes a look at the dated control panel.

SHANNY

Who makes something like this?

NICKY

Soviets. At least they used to.

Nicky fires up his gnarly stogie.

NICKY

Back in the days of the Cold War, Kruschew claimed to have planted dozens of K-G-B agents in the West.

Nicky flicks his ashes on the concrete floor.

NICKY

Supposedly every one of those agents carried around one of these baby nukes. When Moscow gave the order...

Nicky claps his hands loudly.

NICKY

... Ka-Blam!

SHANNY

The suitcase was submerged in water for a coupla weeks. Does that matter?

NICKY

Nah. The electronics are Teflon coated.

SHANNY

What about the...

NICKY

Warhead?

Shanny nods.

NICKY

The half-life of weapons-grade plutonium is twenty-four thousand years, give or take a century.

Nicky tilts the inside panel in the glaring light.

NICKY

All of the controls still look in tact.

Nicky caresses the lethal suitcase.

NICKY

Believe me, this old girl still has some bang left in her.

Nicky takes a long draw off his cigar. Squints at Shanny through the grey smoke.

NICKY

How much?

SHANNY

Forget it.

Shanny tugs at the suitcase. Nicky holds firm.

NICKY

With my contacts, I could get two, maybe three million for it.

Nicky points at Shanny with his chewed up cigar.

NICKY

Better yet, I could start a bidding war. Jack the price even higher.

SHANNY

No sale.

Shanny slams the suitcase closed. Winces as she remembers there's a nuke inside.

NICKY

Come on, Shanny. Fifty-fifty
right down the turnpike.

Nicky latches onto the suitcase.

NICKY

That's enough for both of us
to retire on.

SHANNY

Ya wanna cash it in, Nicky?

Shanny stuffs a twenty in Nicky's shirt pocket.

SHANNY

Buy a lottery ticket.

Shanny shoves Nicky's portly ass aside. Hurries out with the suitcase.

FRONT OFFICE

Nicky watches Shanny and Reza hustle out of his shop. He dials a number on his phone.

NICKY

(into the phone)

You said if a certain suitcase
crossed my path I should call.

Nicky takes a hit off his chewed up cigar. The smoke escapes through his sinister smirk.

INT. PICKUP - NIGHT

Shanny drives. Reza's eyes bulge at the suitcase positioned next to him.

REZA

It's a what?

SHANNY

Chill, Willie. You need an access code to make it go boom.

Reza slides away from the suitcase as far as possible.

REZA

You're taking it to the police, right?

SHANNY

No, I thought I'd list it on E-Bay.

Shanny shoves a stick of bubblegum in her mouth.

SHANNY

If the scratches in the spare bedroom match the width of the suitcase. And if the cops can lift Qusay's prints off of it.

Shanny cracks her gum as she chews.

SHANNY

That places Qusay at the crime scene, plus gives him motive.

REZA

Except the suitcase was at the bottom of the Reflecting Pool. That would wipe clean any fingerprints.

SHANNY

Outside, yes.

Shanny pops a bubble.

SHANNY

Inside no.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Suitcase in hand, Shanny and Reza approach the entrance. Shanny's cell phone PLAYS an Irish jig. She glances at the caller I.D. Shanny picks up.

SHANNY

Hey babe, whassup?

Shanny's smile erodes into a scowl.

SHANNY

Who the fuck is this?

Hello?

Hey --

Reza holds the door open. Shanny stops dead in her tracks.

REZA

What's the matter?

SHANNY

Somebody's got Vivian.

(beat)

They want the suitcase.

INT. BROWNSTONE - NIGHT

A woman's hand flicks a light switch.

Nothing happens.

Cautiously, Shanny walks in.

A .9 millimeter pokes her in the temple.

QUSAY (O.S.)

Move and you die.

Qusay jerks the suitcase away.

Shanny sweeps Qusay off his feet.

The two wrestle for the Glock.

A SHOT rings out. A muffled scream.

SHANNY

Vivian!

Qusay bolts with the suitcase. Shanny runs into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Vivian slumps in a chair. Bound and gagged, her almond eyes stare vacantly. Shanny drops to her knees.

SHANNY

Vivian, no...

INT. CORNER GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Qusay lays a package of Ding-Dongs on the counter. The Korean STOREOWNER rings them up.

STOREOWNER

Eighty-three cents.

A handwritten sign taped to the register captures Qusay's attention.

QUSAY

Where is the room you are renting?

STOREOWNER

Above store.

QUSAY

How much?

STOREOWNER

Four hundred fifty dollars.

Qusay pulls out a fat bankroll.

QUSAY

How much for three days?

The storeowner eyes Qusay's wad of cash.

STOREOWNER

Four hundred fifty dollars.

Qusay sizes up the low profile store. Throws hundreds on the counter like they were ones. The storeowner yanks a bottle of Korbel off the shelf.

STOREOWNER

You like champagne with those Ding-Dongs?

INT. ROOM ABOVE THE STORE - NIGHT

A ceiling light flickers. Qusay surveys the dump. He dials a number on his cell phone.

QUSAY
(in Arabic)
I have the suitcase.

Qusay hangs up. Unlocks the suitcase. Reading from a BlackBerry, Qusay punches numbers on the keypad. The whole control panel lights up like a Christmas tree.

QUSAY
(in Arabic)
"The blood of the martyrs is
the seed of Islam."

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY (SEPTEMBER 6, 2001)

A Anglican priest prays over a rain-soaked casket. A group of well dressed Asians bow their heads. Atop a knoll, Shanny observes the tearful ceremony. Reza approaches from behind.

REZA
Why aren't you with the others?

SHANNY
Vivian's family didn't approve
of us. Now they're eulogizing
her. Fucking hypocrites.

Shanny looks at Reza. Animosity flashes in her eyes.

SHANNY
I'm pulling out. I'm heading
back to New York.

Shanny stares at the Capitol in the distance.

SHANNY
Only reason I stayed in this
snobby-ass town was because of
Vivian.

REZA
What about Qusay?

SHANNY

What about him?

Reza places a hand on Shanny.

REZA

Look, I know you've
experienced --

SHANNY

You have no idea what I'm
feeling!

Shanny swats Reza's hand off her shoulder.

SHANNY

You worried about your
retainer? I'll give ya a
full refund.

Shanny starts off. Reza snags her by the arm.

REZA

Qusay is running around loose
with a nuclear weapon.

Shanny gets in Reza's face.

SHANNY

In case you ain't noticed,
D-C is headquarters to every
federal law enforcement agency
in the country. Why don't you
give one of them a shot?

Shanny storms off.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Reza lays his clothes neatly in a garment bag. The
telephone RINGS. He picks up.

REZA

Hello?
Speaking.

Looking bewildered, Reza stops packing.

REZA

Shanny?
Where are you?

Reza glances at his watch.

REZA

I'll be there as soon as I can.

INT. GAY BAR - NIGHT

The tables are overturned. Police interview a crowd of distraught women. Reza strides in with an air of authority. A PATROLMAN intercepts him.

PATROLMAN

The bar's closed.

REZA

Reza Kadivar. I'm
Ms. Shanahan's attorney.

He looks around the wrecked beer joint.

REZA

What are the charges against
my client?

PATROLMAN

Assault and battery.
Destruction of private
property.

Reza heads for Shanny. The patrolman stops him.

PATROLMAN

You can talk to your client
at the station.

REZA

I'll confer with my client now.
Unless you prefer I take this
up with your watch commander?

Reza walks around the officer. Handcuffed to a booth, Shanny nonchalantly pops her bubblegum. Reza slides in next to her.

SHANNY

I tell you to leave me alone
and then I call you for help.
Ain't that just like a dame?

REZA

What happened?

SHANNY

Too many cocks in the hen
house.

Reza notices a paramedic treating a BURLY WOMAN in a
torn muscle tee.

REZA

Is that your sparring partner?

Shanny nods. Reza stands. Walks over to the bar.

REZA

(to the burly woman)

I'm the attorney for
Ms. Shanahan.

Reza assesses the woman's swollen eye and busted lip.

REZA

I understand you're pressing
charges.

BURLY WOMAN

Goddamn right, I am!

REZA

Are you certain you wish to go
to court? Have it on record
you were beaten up by a woman
half your size?

The burly woman ignores Reza.

REZA

That type of public revelation
could be highly embarrassing
to a woman of your obvious
prowess...

Reza bends down to whisper.

REZA

... not to mention extremely
damaging to your social life.

The burly woman shoves the paramedic aside. Makes a
beeline for Shanny.

BURLY WOMAN

Next time, bitch, your ass is
mine!

The burly woman leaves the bar in a huff. Reza
approaches the patrolman.

REZA

It appears the plaintiff has
dropped all charges.

The cop flips open his notepad.

PATROLMAN

There's still three hundred
and twenty-six dollars in
property damage.

The tattooed bar owner picks up pieces of a broken stool.
Reza walks up. Extends his platinum credit card.

REZA

For the damaged heirlooms.

EXT. DOWNTOWN WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Tired fishmongers shutter their stores for the evening.
Sitting on the hood of her pickup, Shanny and Reza watch
the lighted cruise ships sail down the Potomac.

SHANNY

I met Vivian at the Night and
Day in Brooklyn. We both
liked hot jazz and cold beers.

Shanny turns to Reza.

SHANNY

The city councilwoman Vivian
was working for won her
congressional seat. She asked
Vivian to run her D-C office.
That's how we wound up here.

A creeping sadness erodes the smile on Shanny's face.

SHANNY

Vivian was the whole package.
Brains. Looks. A heart of
gold.

Shanny casts her eyes downward.

SHANNY

What the hell she saw in me.

REZA

Strength. Compassion.

Shanny hops off the hood of her truck.

SHANNY

I'll finish the case.

REZA

Thought you were moving back --

Shanny chuckles.

SHANNY

Vivian would've kicked my ass
for bailing on a client.

She looks seriously at Reza.

SHANNY

Besides, I need closure...
just like you.

INT. BROWNSTONE - DAY (SEPTEMBER 7, 2001)

Shanny cranks out one-arm push-ups in the living room.
A KNOCK at the door. Shanny snatches a bottle of
Chablis from a wine rack. She cocks it overhead.

SHANNY

(calls out)

Yeah?

REZA (O.S.)

It's Reza.

Shanny opens up. Reza eyeballs the wine bottle aimed at his head.

REZA
It's a little early to be
imbibing, isn't it?

Reza walks in. Shanny closes the door. Restacks the bottle of chablis.

REZA
I was thinking.

SHANNY
So was I.

REZA
About Qusay?

SHANNY
About who tipped him off.

Shanny takes a slug of Gatorade.

SHANNY
Other than you and me, who
else knew we had the suitcase?

EXT. PAWNSHOP - NIGHT

Nicky rolls out a metal grate and locks up.

An arm constricts around his neck.

It cuts off his windpipe.

A purple pickup SCREECHES to a halt.

INT. PICKUP - NIGHT

Shanny crams Nicky into the back of the extended cab.

She sits on his spine.

Reza gives it the GAS.

SHANNY

A friend of yours broke into
my crib the other night.

NICKY

I don't have any friends.

Shanny grinds her knuckles into Nicky's cheekbones.

SHANNY

Where's the fucking suitcase?

NICKY

I dunno!

Shanny yanks back on Nicky's ear lobes.

NICKY

Ahhh, I swear to God!

Shanny digs her fingers into Nicky's nostrils.

SHANNY

How do you contact Qusay?

NICKY

Jesus, Shanny, you're killing
me!

Shanny leans back with all of her body weight.

Pulls on Nicky's nose the whole way.

NICKY

(nasally)

My wallet. Stick note.

Shanny rifles through Nicky's wallet. Digs out a yellow
sticky with a phone number scribbled on it.

SHANNY

How much, Nicky?

NICKY

What?

SHANNY

How much did Qusay pay you?

She tugs on Nicky's schnoz again.

NICKY

Ahhh! Five large!

Pure hatred brews in Shanny's eyes.

SHANNY

Five grand? That's what
Vivian's life was worth?

Shanny jackhammers Nicky with her fists.

REZA

Shanny!

Her chest heaving, Shanny slides off Nicky.

SHANNY

(to Reza)

Pull over!

Reza swings the truck into a construction site.

Shanny throws open the passenger door.

She kicks Nicky out.

Nicky bellyflops in a huge mud puddle.

INT. AUDI R-8 - DAY (SEPTEMBER 8, 2001)

Qusay hops in.

Senses someone is next to him.

Qusay whips out a gun.

Cocks it in Pasha's face.

PASHA

You should lock your doors.

Qusay holsters his Glock 17.

QUSAY

You were not suppose to
contact me again.

PASHA

Drive.

Qusay REVS the V-8. Pulls into traffic.

PASHA
Mohammed is flying in tomorrow.

QUSAY
Why?

PASHA
There's been a change in the target.

QUSAY
He cannot --

PASHA
Mohammed speaks for Kabul.

The strain is evident in Qusay's face.

QUSAY
What is the new target?

PASHA
The Pentagon.

Pasha eyes the President's residence as they drive down Pennsylvania Avenue.

PASHA
Another team will take out the White House.

Pasha turns back to Qusay.

PASHA
Be at my house tomorrow. Two o'clock sharp.

Pasha spies a gold Mercedes.

PASHA
There's my car.

Qusay double-parks. Pasha reaches for the door.

Qusay clamps down on his trachea.

Pasha's bulbous eyes bulge even bigger.

QUSAY

If you ever sneak up on me
again...

Pasha gurgles. Seconds pass like minutes.

Pasha slaps at Qusay's hand.

Slowly, Qusay releases his death grip.

Pasha gets the hell out of the car.

EXT. CYBER CAFE - DAY

ANTOINE, 30, a flamboyant black Frenchman, keypunches on a laptop. Sipping lattes, Shanny and Reza peek over his shoulder.

ANTOINE

I'm in, mon ami.

SHANNY

Pull up the directory.

Antoine continues speed typing on his laptop.

ANTOINE

Phone number?

Shanny slides Antoine Nicky's stick note. He keys it in.

ANTOINE

It comes up under the name,
Pablo Ramirez.

REZA

Same alias Qusay used at the
motel.

SHANNY

(to Antoine)

Gimme the address?

Antoine squints at the monitor. Slips on a pair of red rhinestone glasses.

ANTOINE

Sorry, Shanny. It's a P-O box.

REZA
Can you access billing?

ANTOINE
Certainement!

Antoine flips through different screens.

ANTOINE
Bon! What now, cheri?

REZA
Under the account Shanny gave
you, are there any phone
numbers that recur say, three
or more times?

Antoine adjusts his outlandish spectacles.

ANTOINE
Oui, there's two. One's a
seven-oh-three. The other is
a five-oh-eight area code.

SHANNY
Seven-oh-three is Virginia.

ANTOINE
Five-oh-eight is Boston. I
know this because I once spent
a lost weekend --

SHANNY
Spare us the dirty details,
Antoine.

Reza leans in to get a better view of the monitor.

REZA
Can you cross-reference an
address?

Antoine inhales Reza's cologne as he sits closer.

ANTOINE
Way ahead of you, cheri.
Which phone number?

REZA
Virginia.

Antoine rapidly types.

ANTOINE

Voila!

Antoine jots down the address. Hands it to Reza.
Shanny snatches it from him.

SHANNY

Thanks, Antoine. I owe ya big
time.

Antoine leers at Reza as he stands to his full six feet.

ANTOINE

Just have your gorgeous ami
give me his number and we'll
call it even.

SHANNY

Down, Antoine. Reza's not
your type.

ANTOINE

And you know this how?

SHANNY

I asked his wife and kids.

Shanny drags Reza out of the cafe.

INT. PICKUP - DAY (SEPTEMBER 9, 2001)

Parked in the woods, Shanny focuses a pair of hi-powered
binoculars on a Tudor mansion. Reza munches on a hoagie.

SHANNY

Explain something to me. How
does a guy who owns a discount
rug store afford a seven
figure mansion?

REZA

Maybe he's lucky at the
lottery.

SHANNY

And maybe I'm Paris Hilton.

Shanny trades the binos for a bite of her sub.

SHANNY

You never told me what your wife does.

REZA

Joanna? She's a funeral director.

SHANNY

Now there's a lively job.

REZA

It's the family business.

SHANNY

If I was born into that family, I'd put myself up for adoption.

A black sports coupe barrels down a gravel road.

SHANNY

Looks like the rug man's got company.

Shanny snaps up the binoculars. Refocuses them.

SHANNY

Well if it ain't Lucifer himself.

REZA

Qusay?

SHANNY

And some other jerkoff.

Shanny ditches the binos. Grabs a ditty bag.

SHANNY

C'mon.

EXT. TUDOR MANSION - DAY

Peering in the windows, Shanny and Reza scurry across a manicured lawn. They stop at a glassed-in atrium. Shanny extracts an electronic gizmo from her ditty bag.

REZA

What's that?

SHANNY

A contact mike.

Shanny presses a suction cup to the atrium glass. Slips on a connecting headset.

SHANNY

Shit! They're talking in Arabic.

Shanny passes the earphones to Reza. He puts them on. Tapping the earphones, Reza shakes his head.

REZA

I'm getting static.

Shanny yanks the suction cup and licks it once. She sticks it back on the glass.

REZA

Very hi-tech.

SHANNY

Just listen, will ya?

Reza concentrates on the conversation in the headset.

REZA

The rug man just left the room.

SHANNY

If he's going for refreshments, I'll take a beer.

Reza cups his hands over the headset.

REZA

The other man is called Mohammed. He's telling Qusay there will be four planes instead of three.

SHANNY

Planes? What are they doing? Chartering a trip to Vegas?

Reza holds up his hand. Silences Shanny.

REZA

Qusay is telling Mohammed that
he has changed the
reservations to September the
eleventh.

SHANNY

The eleventh? That's only two
days --

Lighting his pipe, Pasha stumbles across Shanny and Reza
eavesdropping.

PASHA

You! What are you doing?

GUNSHOTS go off inside the mansion.

The glass wall of the atrium SHATTERS.

Shanny claws at her face.

Blood streams down her cheeks.

SHANNY

I can't see!

Reza drags Shanny through the woods.

Bullets WHIZ through the trees clipping off branches.

Reza shoves Shanny in the pickup.

The tires SPIN on wet leaves.

EXT. CAPITAL BELTWAY - DAY

The pickup and the black Audi FLY down an on-ramp.

They weave through traffic at hair-raising SPEEDS.

INT. PICKUP

Hot lead PEPPERS the truck.

The windshield SPLINTERS. The sideview mirrors BLOW OUT.

Shanny ducks her bleeding head.

Reza spots the Audi making a run at them.

REZA

They're getting closer!

Shanny stomps her foot on top of Reza's.

Mashes the ACCELERATOR.

The pickup BUMPS a Yugo.

The other driver veers off.

EXT. CAPITAL BELTWAY

A state trooper CHARGES out of his hiding place.

Pulls even with the swerving Audi.

Qusay cuts loose with an UZI.

FLIPS the chase car end over end.

INT. PICKUP

A horrific CRASH jolts Shanny upright.

SHANNY

What the hell was that?

REZA

They shot a state trooper!

Shanny squints her bloody eyes.

SHANNY

Where are we?

REZA

We just passed the exit for
Tyson's Corner.

SHANNY

There's a grassy median coming
up.

REZA

I see it.

SHANNY

Cut across it and take the
first off-ramp on the other
side.

Reza peels his eyes away from the blurred road.

REZA

Are you insane?

More BULLETS rip through the truck.

SHANNY

You got a better idea?

EXT. CAPITAL BELTWAY

The pickup BOUNCES across the median strip.

It SKIDS into oncoming traffic.

A SPEEDING SEMI SMASHES into the pickup.

CATAPULTS it over a guardrail.

INT. HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY

Reza wraps his two quaking hands around a styrofoam cup.
He nervously sips his black coffee. Clad in O.R. greens,
a Nigerian SURGEON approaches.

SURGEON

Are you with Ms. Shanahan?

Reza ejects from his chair.

REZA

Yes.

SURGEON

I'm Doctor Ayuba.

REZA

How is she?

SURGEON

We've removed all the fragments from Ms. Shanahan's eyes. However, both corneas have suffered traumatic abrasions.

Reza puts down his coffee.

REZA

What does that mean?

SURGEON

Currently, Ms. Shanahan can only differentiate between light and dark.

A hopelessness appears in Reza's face.

REZA

In other words, she's blind.

SURGEON

Temporarily. As the abrasions heal, Ms. Shanahan's vision will return.

(beat)

I can't predict, though, to what extent.

The surgeon removes his sweat-stained cap.

SURGEON

I've prescribed a sedative for Ms. Shanahan. The less moving around she does the better.

REZA

Thank you, doctor.

The surgeon leaves. Reza collapses in a chair.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Shanny knocks a glass of water out of Reza's hand. She BREAKS it.

SHANNY

I don't want any more fucking pills!

Shanny clutches her bandaged eyes.

SHANNY

I can't see!

Reza starts to collect the broken glass. Shanny latches onto his sleeve.

SHANNY

Please, don't leave me.

Reza sits next to Shanny in bed. He envelops her in a comforting hug. Their lips brush together.

SHANNY

Reza...

Softly, Reza kisses Shanny. She pulls Reza on top of her. They go at it in bed.

HOTEL SUITE - NEXT DAY (SEPTEMBER 10, 2001)

Reza awakens in a tangle of bedsheets. Shanny is nowhere to be found. Reza sits bolt upright. Slouched in a chair, Shanny basks in the morning sun. Her bare feet perched on the windowsill.

REZA

What are you doing?

SHANNY

Pretending I'm on a beach in Puerto Rico.

Reza starts to speak. He can't find the words. Shanny senses the awkward silence.

SHANNY

Cat got your tongue?

REZA

We need to talk.

Shanny flashes a mischievous grin.

SHANNY

About what?

REZA

About what happened last night.

SHANNY

What happened is you and I had sex.

Shanny searches out Reza's hand and takes hold of it.

SHANNY

I needed to be close to someone.

REZA

Shanny, I'm a married man!

SHANNY

And I'm a lesbian!

Shanny drops Reza's hand like a hot potato.

SHANNY

I'd say we both stepped out of the box.

Shanny gets up. Feels her way to the wet bar. Shanny pulls a small bottle out of the fridge.

SHANNY

What's this?

REZA

Prune juice.

SHANNY

Figures.

Shanny pitches it over her shoulder. Reza walks over to Shanny and grabs her.

REZA

How can you be so cavalier?

SHANNY

What do you want me to say?

Another weighty silence between the two of them.

SHANNY

You're not having feelings for me, are you?

REZA

Of course not!

Realizing his hand is still clutching Shanny's, Reza jerks it back.

REZA

I just...

SHANNY

Never cheated on your wife?
(in a manly voice)
Especially with a dyke?

Gingerly, Shanny touches the bandages covering her eyes.

SHANNY

Look, we both came close to buying the farm. We're sorting through a lot of emotions here.

Shanny feels out Reza's hand again.

SHANNY

Don't worry, Reza. I won't hound you for an engagement ring.

The two break out in laughter.

SHANNY

Call room service, will ya?
I could go for a mimosa.

HOTEL SUITE - LATER

Reza works on his laptop. Suited and booted, Shanny feels her way out of the bathroom.

REZA

Going somewhere?

SHANNY

Got an eleven o'clock.

REZA
With whom?

SHANNY
The Feds.

REZA
Considering a change in career?

SHANNY
I'm giving them all we've got
on Qusay.

Reza pushes away from his computer.

REZA
The doctor said --

SHANNY
Screw the doctor.

Reza stands. Approaches Shanny.

REZA
How do you intend to get there?

SHANNY
There's this big yellow thing
with four tires called a taxi.

Searching, Shanny sweeps her hand across the bed.

SHANNY
I may be blind, but I'm not...

Reza dangles Shanny's vest in front of her. Smelling
the leather, Shanny snatches it.

SHANNY
... helpless.

REZA
Why don't I drive you?

SHANNY
Geez, it took ya long enough.

INT. HOOVER BUILDING - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

An uptight FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT clicks off a video camera.

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

I think we have enough.

Sitting across from her, Shanny and Reza look flabbergasted.

SHANNY

That's it?

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

I've recorded your statements.
We'll look into it.

REZA

When?

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

An agent will verify the
information you've provided.
If it checks out, a formal
investigation will be
initiated.

The F.B.I. agent gets up to leave. Shanny vaults out of her chair.

SHANNY

There's a guy walking around
this city with a nuclear bomb.

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

In a suitcase.

SHANNY

That's right.

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

And verification of said
nuclear device was made by a
pawnbroker.

SHANNY

Who also happens to be the
biggest arms dealer this side
of Adnan Khashoggi.

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

So you say.

SHANNY

Pull Nicky's rap sheet!

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

I intend to.

The F.B.I. agent heads for the door. This time Reza cuts her off.

REZA

Agent Simmons. Whatever Qusay and his cohorts are planning, they intend to carry it out on September the eleventh. That's less than twenty-four hours away.

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

Doctor Caviar --

REZA

For the last time, it's pronounced Kadivar!

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

Do you have any idea how many tips the Bureau receives on a weekly basis? Thousands.

The female F.B.I. agent opens the door.

FEMALE F.B.I. AGENT

Do you know how many of those leads turn out to be credible? Less than one percent.

Shanny chuckles.

SHANNY

And I thought the only place to catch a good stand-up routine was the comedy club on G Street.

Shanny feels for Reza's arm.

SHANNY

C'mon. Let's blow this pop
stand.

Shanny and Reza leave the F.B.I. agent holding the door.

EXT. JEFFERSON MEMORIAL - DAY

Sitting on the concrete steps, Reza gazes at the sun
setting behind the Washington Monument. Looking cool in
her Raybans, Shanny kicks back in the warm breeze.

REZA

You know I have to leave.

SHANNY

Yeah.

Reza turns to Shanny.

REZA

We did everything we could.

SHANNY

Just bites my ass that
sonovabitch got away.

REZA

What concerns me is what Qusay
intends to do with that bomb?

SHANNY

Let's hope Nicky was wrong and
the damn thing is actually a
dud.

Shanny sits up. Turns her face in Reza's direction.

SHANNY

When you get back to
Mississippi --

REZA

Minnesota.

SHANNY

Whatever. What are you gonna
tell your wife? About us?

REZA

The truth.

SHANNY

Think she'll understand?

REZA

I pray to Allah she does.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Trading shots of Jameson, Shanny and Reza get tanked.

REZA

You know it's my birthday.

SHANNY

Mozoltov!

The two knock back their whiskeys. Shanny feels for the bottle. Overpours her glass.

REZA

Did I mention Moslems don't drink?

Reza tops off his own glass.

SHANNY

That's why they have all those problems in the Middle East. Not enough people there get toasted.

Reza drifts off in thought.

SHANNY

Thinking about your mom, aren't you?

REZA

How did you know?

SHANNY

Just a vibe.

Shanny kicks up her Tony Lamas on the bed.

SHANNY

What was she like?

REZA

In a word?

Reza takes a snort.

REZA

Strong.

Reza erupts into a coughing fit.

SHANNY

Like that twelve-year-old
Irish whiskey.

(beat)

How did your mom get along
with the missus?

REZA

They didn't.

Reza pours himself another shot.

REZA

Joanna is American. And worse...
Episcopalian.

SHANNY

I hear ya, brother.

Shanny empties her glass.

SHANNY

My old lady flipped out when I
told her I was lesbian.

Feeling the warmth of the Jameson, Shanny unbuttons her
shirt down to her cleavage.

SHANNY

Do you know she actually
brought home our parish priest
to exorcise the demons out of
me?

REZA

I used to blame my mother for
the wedge she placed between
us.

Reza polishes off his drink.

REZA

Yet it was I who moved away.

SHANNY

"We make our fortunes and we call them fate."

REZA

Who said that?

SHANNY

Disraeli.

Shanny hiccups. Straightens her sunglasses.

SHANNY

Or was it Dizzy Gillespie?

Reza raises his empty shot glass. Says something in Farsi.

SHANNY

What does that mean?

REZA

I have to throw up.

Reza zig zags into the bathroom. WRENCHES his guts out. A KNOCK at the door. Shanny clumsily feels her way across the suite.

SHANNY

Yeah?

JOANNA (O.S.)

Is this Doctor Kadivar's room?

SHANNY

Who's asking?

JOANNA (O.S.)

His wife.

Shanny's jaw drops. She opens the door. JOANNA KADIVAR, 40, looks like she's all business in her Bill Blass suit. Joanna sizes up Shanny in her butt hugging jeans and exposed cleavage.

JOANNA

Who are you?

SHANNY

Moira Shanahan.

She extends her hand to Reza's wife.

SHANNY

I'm the P-I your husband wired.
Uh, hired.

Sensing the tension, Shanny retracts her hand. Joanna marches in.

JOANNA

Where's my husband?

SHANNY

He's in the, uh --

Reza stumbles out of the bathroom bare chested.

REZA

I got it all over my...

Reza eyeballs his wife.

REZA

... Joanna? What are you --

JOANNA

I thought I would surprise you
on your birthday.

Joanna shoots Shanny a disapproving look.

JOANNA

It appears, though, the
surprise is on me.

Shanny feels her way to the door.

SHANNY

Why don't I --

JOANNA

Stay where you are.

SHANNY

Stay where I'm at.

Shanny freezes in her tracks.

REZA

Joanna, Shanny and I were just
having --

JOANNA

I can see what you were just
having.

Joanna eyes the bottle of booze on the table. Reza
takes hold of her.

REZA

Joanna, it's not...

JOANNA

It's not what, Reza?

Reza's face confesses it all. Joanna storms out of the
suite.

REZA

Joanna!

Shanny feels Reza rush by. She pulls him back.

SHANNY

Let me.

INT. ELEVATOR

Fuming, Joanna marches in. Shanny stumbles in after her.

SHANNY

We need to talk.

JOANNA

How dare you.

SHANNY

Just cool your jets, lady.

Shanny gropes for the STOP switch. Pulls it. The
elevator JERKS to a halt.

SHANNY

Look, things aren't how they --

Joanna cracks Shanny with a hard slap.

JOANNA
I'm not blind, damn it!

SHANNY
No, but I am!

Joanna waves her hand in front of Shanny's Raybans. No reaction.

JOANNA
Good Lord.

SHANNY
We were in a bad accident a couple of days ago. I lost my eyesight.

Shanny rubs her throbbing cheek.

SHANNY
The first night I came home from the hospital, Reza tried to comfort me.

Shanny takes a step back -- out of striking range.

SHANNY
We made love. Accidentally.

Red with anger, Joanna deactivates the STOP switch. The elevator JERKS into motion.

SHANNY
Your husband wasn't looking for a piece of ass that night.

JOANNA
But he got lucky anyway.

Shanny clutches the sleeve of Joanna's tailored suit.

SHANNY
Listen, sister. Reza was trying to console me. I had not only lost my eyesight... I had lost all hope.

JOANNA

And if you think I'm buying
any of this bilge, you've also
lost your mind.

The elevator doors open. Joanna vacates the scene.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

A steady downpour bounces off the front awning. Shanny
hits the memory dial on her cell phone.

SHANNY

Antoine, it's Shanny. Sorry
to call you this late.

Looking like a homeless waif, Shanny turns up her collar
against the blowing rain.

SHANNY

I, uh... I need a place to
crash for the night.

INT. APARTMENT - DAY (SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 - 5:56 A.M.)

Somewhere, a cell phone PLAYS an Irish Jig. A woman's
hand pokes out from a bed sheet covering a couch. It
retrieves a cell phone off the floor.

SHANNY (V.O.)

Yeah?
Reza?

Shanny sits up. The bed sheet falls to the side.

SHANNY

A nine-thirty flight?
What time is it now?

Shanny vigorously scratches her scalp. Tries to wake up.

SHANNY

Where's Joanna?
You made nice, huh?

She sweeps her hand across the carpet.

SHANNY

I'd like to see you before you
go.

Shanny snags her jeans. She slips into them.

SHANNY

Tell you what. I'll pick you
up at the hotel.
Don't worry. I've got you
covered.

Shanny tosses the cell phone.

SHANNY

Antoine!

INT. ROOM ABOVE THE STORE - DAY (6:18 A.M.)

Having shaved off his beard, Qusay leaves his
semi-automatic on the table. He picks up the suitcase
bomb and an airline ticket. Qusay saunters out.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY (6:39 A.M.)

Blowing her bubblegum, Shanny leans against a GEO Metro.
Reza and Joanna walk out.

REZA

(to Shanny)

What's the matter? All of the
limousines booked up?

Shanny motions to the subcompact car.

SHANNY

This is all an unemployed P-I
can afford.

Sitting behind the wheel, Antoine waves daintily at Reza.
Reza returns the gesture. Joanna looks strangely at her
husband.

REZA

(to the bellhop)

You can load our luggage in
the, uh...

SHANNY

Call it what it is. A phone booth.

Grunting, the bellhop crams the suitcases into the miniscule trunk. Reza frisks himself.

JOANNA

Forgot your wallet again, didn't you?

REZA

I'll be right back.

Reza hurries into the hotel. Joanna approaches Shanny.

JOANNA

What are the chances of you getting your eyesight back?

SHANNY

The docs aren't making any promises.

JOANNA

My uncle is the chief of ophthalmic surgery at Riverside Memorial.

Joanna places her hand on Shanny's shoulder.

JOANNA

In case you want a second opinion.

SHANNY

I appreciate that.
(beat)
Are you and Reza okay?

JOANNA

We had a long talk.

SHANNY

Did he mention I'm usually gay?

JOANNA

Oh, yeah.

Reza hustles out of the hotel waving his wallet.

REZA

Got it!

SHANNY

Okay, guys. Inhale deeply and
jump in.

The threesome contort themselves into Antoine's car and
take off.

INT. DULLES AIRPORT - TICKET COUNTER - DAY (7:22 A.M.)

A TICKET AGENT hands Joanna a pair of boarding passes.

TICKET AGENT

That's American flight
seventy-seven to Los Angeles
with a stopover in Minneapolis.

His face the color of pea soup, Reza moseys over with
Shanny on his arm.

REZA

I think I'm going to be --

Reza plasters his hand over his mouth and hurries off.

JOANNA

Reza never used to drink
before. Wonder where he
picked that up?

SHANNY

Beats me.

RESTROOM

Wiping his brow with a handkerchief, Reza passes Qusay
walking in with the suitcase. The two men make eye
contact. They keep walking.

NEWSSTAND

Reza jogs over to Shanny leaning against a wall.

REZA

Where's Joanna?

SHANNY

Checking out the latest
Redbook.

REZA

Guess who I saw in the men's
room?

SHANNY

RuPaul?

REZA

Qusay.

Shanny straightens up.

SHANNY

You sure?

REZA

He shaved off his beard, but
it's him.

SHANNY

Where's security?

Reza's eyes dart around the terminal.

REZA

There's a guard standing at
the information booth.

SHANNY

You locate Qusay. Point me
towards the guard.

REZA

Joanna --

SHANNY

There isn't time.

Reza lines Shanny up with the information booth.

REZA

Straight ahead. About fifty feet.

SHANNY

Don't lose that bastard.

Feeling her way, Shanny ricochets off passengers hurrying for their flights.

TERMINAL (7:43 A.M.)

Clutching Shanny's arm, SECURITY GUARD #1 makes a beeline for the restrooms.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Wait here.

RESTROOM

Cautiously, the security guard steps in.

In the corner, Qusay pounds Reza senseless.

The security guard draws his weapon.

SECURITY GUARD #1

Freeze!

Qusay dumps Reza on the floor.

The security guard closes in.

Qusay shifts his weight, angling for an attack.

The security guard cocks the hammer on his gun.

SECURITY GUARD #1

I said freeze, motherfucker!

Shanny lumbers in.

SECURITY GUARD #1

(turns to Shanny)

I told you --

From the blindside, a karate chop breaks the guard's neck.

REZA

Shanny, look out!

Shanny swings a wild punch.

Qusay sidekicks her.

Knocks Shanny on her ass.

Qusay dashes off with the suitcase.

SHANNY

Reza!

Crumpled on the floor, Reza lets loose a groan. Shanny crawls to him. Feels the blood oozing from Reza's head.

SHANNY

How bad are you hurt?

REZA

He's got the suitcase.

SHANNY

Can you stand?

REZA

As soon as the room stops spinning.

TERMINAL

Shanny staggers out of the restroom. Joanna runs up to her.

JOANNA

What were you doing in the --

SHANNY

Reza was jumped.

JOANNA

Jumped? Is he --

Shanny holds Joanna back.

SHANNY

Where are the departure gates?

JOANNA

What?

SHANNY

I don't have time to explain.

Shanny shakes Joanna.

SHANNY

The departure gates! Where
the hell are they?

JOANNA

To your left. You'll never --

Shanny starts walking.

She bounces off people like a pinball.

Shanny throws off her shades. Tears away her bandages.

The fluorescent lights hit her like a twenty pound sledge.

CONCOURSE

Shanny topples over an empty stroller.

Sprawled on the floor, Shanny squints hard.

Spots the flash of an aluminum-plated suitcase.

BOARDING GATE (8:06 A.M.)

Quickly, an AIRLINE ATTENDANT checks Qusay's boarding
pass.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

You'll have to hurry, sir.
The plane has been cleared to
taxi.

Qusay hoofs it with the small suitcase.

Shanny runs at full tilt.

Blows by the attendant.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

Excuse me! Miss!

Shanny tackles Qusay.

The two grapple.

Gouging eyes.

Yanking hair.

AIRLINE ATTENDANT

(into a phone)

We have a disturbance at gate...

Qusay kicks Shanny.

Splits her head wide open.

Qusay hauls ass with the suitcase.

PASSENGER RUNWAY

The airplane cabin door closes.

Qusay sprints the last yards.

QUSAY

Wait!

Qusay pulls at the cabin door with his fingertips.

A fist slams him in the kidneys. Staggers him.

Shanny snatches the suitcase. Qusay trips her.

Several security guards stampede towards them.

SECURITY GUARD #2

Hold it! Both of you!

Qusay looks at the suitcase.

Looks at the plane.

Qusay shoves his way on board.

The cabin door slams shut.

SECURITY GUARD #2

Hey you! Stop!

The security guard pounds on the side of the plane.

It taxis away.

AIRPORT INTERROGATION ROOM (9:56 A.M.)

A pair of armed guards flank the door. Shanny and Reza nurse their wounds with matching ice packs. The CHIEF OF SECURITY strides in.

CHIEF OF SECURITY

Your stories check out.

He tosses a pair of I.D.s on a table.

SHANNY

Did you call the plane back?

CHIEF OF SECURITY

No.

REZA

Why not?

A grave expression darkens the chief's grizzled face.

CHIEF OF SECURITY

Eighteen minutes ago, American Airlines flight seventy-seven went down over Washington.

SHANNY

What?

REZA

My God. That was the flight Joanna and I were supposed to be on.

CHIEF OF SECURITY

The plane was purposely diverted. It made a descending approach on the Pentagon.

(swallows hard)

The entire western quadrant, at least what's left of it, is engulfed in flames.

Shanny looks at Reza with disbelief.

CHIEF OF SECURITY

It's also being reported two
other passenger planes have
crashed into the Twin Towers
in New York.

Reza lowers his bruised face into his hands. Quietly
sobs.

CHIEF OF SECURITY

It could've been a hell of a
lot worse. The terrorist you
were chasing could've exploded
that nuclear bomb.

Shanny huddles over Reza's trembling body.

FADE OUT.