

MIDNIGHT CHILD

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By

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FADE IN:

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - BROWNSTONE - DAY

ALEXIS, 16, razor cut blonde, a real knock out in a red sequin mini, sashays up to a silver stretch. JACKIE MIDNIGHT, 40, black, smooth as silk ladies' man with a Cockney accent, steps out.

ALEXIS

What's with the door-to-door,
Jackie?

MIDNIGHT

Client's paying triple the
rate, luv. In cash.

Alexis presses her curvy hips against Midnight's crotch.

ALEXIS

Don't trust me with all those
Ben Franklins?

Alexis strokes Midnight behind his ear.

ALEXIS

You know I'm straight up, baby.

Midnight grabs Alexis' French manicured fingers.
Plucks his gold hoop from her thieving hand.

MIDNIGHT

You're as kinky as they come,
bitch. That's why you fetch
ten grand a night.

Midnight smacks Alexis with a fiery lip lock.

MIDNIGHT

Get that Ferrari red ass in
the limo.

INT. HOTEL - DAY

Midnight raps on a door. Alexis tousles her spiked hair with a quick shake. The door slowly opens. BARAK, a big beefy Arab, appears in a black velvet robe.

MIDNIGHT

Sheik Barak?

Barak eyes Alexis like a starving wolf. Midnight snaps his fingers. Barak levels an unsettling stare at him.

MIDNIGHT

You the chap who requested a companion for the evening?

Barak nods.

MIDNIGHT

This little lovely comes C-O-D.
Cash on delivery.

Barak closes the door.

ALEXIS

Jesus, Jackie. This C-J gives me the willies.

MIDNIGHT

Just remember luv, your end's forty percent of the payoff. That's a cool twelve Gs in your garter belt.

Alexis backs away.

ALEXIS

I'm getting really bad vibes?--

Midnight grasps Alexis' arm.

Whips out a switchblade.

MIDNIGHT

If things get out of control, you know how to clear out.

Midnight retracts the blade. Stashes it in Alexis' evening bag. The door swings open. Barak tosses Midnight a stack of cash.

BARAK

You're paid.

Smiling, Midnight fans the hundred dollar bills.

MIDNIGHT

Nice doing business --

Barak pulls Alexis inside his suite.

He slams the door in Midnight's face.

MIDNIGHT
Bloody camel jockey.

HOTEL CORRIDOR - NIGHT

O.S., a bloodcurdling SCREAM.

Sleepy-eyed guests peer out of their rooms.

Stoned and naked, Barak lumbers out of his suite.

Drags a blood-soaked scimitar.

HOTEL SUITE - LATER

Sgt. RAWLINS, 45, his Big Easy cool masks an underlying edge, interviews hotel security.

HELEN (O.S.)
Sergeant Rawlins!

Rawlins' eyes roll towards the door. Spots Assistant District Attorney HELEN PRESCOTT, 40, an emerald evening gown sets off her china white complexion.

RAWLINS
A-D-A Prescott!

Rawlins ushers Helen past a busy forensics team.

RAWLINS
Sorry about --

HELEN
Forget it. At least this time
I got to finish my appetizer.

Helen surveys the \$5,000 a night suite.

HELEN
Who's the fifty-one-fifty?

RAWLINS
The hairy gent sitting over
there.

Helen glances at Barak who is splattered with blood.

RAWLINS

His name's Sheik Walid Ahmed Tariq Barak. During his little B and D party, Barak decapped a call girl with a four foot sword.

Rawlins produces an embossed business card.

RAWLINS

The hooker's business card says Alexis Cartier. Probably an alias. I'll run her prints through our database, as well as Missing Children's.

HELEN

Missing Children's?

Rawlins observes the medical examiner wheeling out a black body bag.

RAWLINS

M-E says the girl couldn't have been more than sixteen.

HELEN

That's just a little older than my daughter.

Helen glares at Barak.

HELEN

Other than being obviously rich, what's Barak's claim to fame?

RAWLINS

According to his I-D, he's the charge d'affaires for the Yemeni consulate. Of course he's claiming diplomatic immunity.

HELEN

Of course. Does the sheik have any priors?

Rawlins withdraws a Palm Pre from his denim jacket.

RAWLINS

Barak came up clean on N-C-I-C.
Interpol was a different story.

Rawlins pulls up something on his Palm.

RAWLINS

Questioned, nineteen
ninety-seven. Dismemberment
of a transvestite in
Montmartre. Detained,
two thousand and one. Rape
and mutilation of a twelve-
year-old prostitute in Bangkok.
Convicted in absentia,
two thousand and three --

HELEN

Enough. I'm about to lose my
shrimp cocktail. I don't want
that neanderthal slipping out
of this one.

She turns back to Rawlins.

HELEN

I'll call State. See if one
of their people can fly out
A-S-A-P.

Helen walks towards the door. Spins around.

HELEN

Sergeant Rawlins.

RAWLINS

Ma'am.

HELEN

Do your best to locate the
girl's family.

Helen spots a blood smeared handprint on the bedroom
door.

HELEN

And sergeant... spare them the
details.

Rawlins nods.

INT. PENTHOUSE - NIGHT

A flashy D.J. cranks out catchy rhythms for the gangsta chic. SIAM, 25, looks suave, but sounds street, leans over a leather wraparound couch. He whispers something into Midnight's ear. Midnight's jaw drops.

EXT. TERRACE

A foreign businessman fingers CLARISSE, 16, a gorgeous Asian call girl, underneath her dress. Midnight and Siam approach.

MIDNIGHT

Clarisse, why don't you show
Mr. Arjoosingh the jacuze?

Midnight's face reflects the urgency. Clarisse escorts the businessman off the terrace. She lingers for a moment by the sliding glass door.

MIDNIGHT

(to Siam)

What do you mean Alexis is
dead?

SIAM

Barak took a goddamn sword and
sliced her fucking head off.

MIDNIGHT

Bloody hell.

With a trapped look in his eyes, Midnight scans the San Francisco skyline.

MIDNIGHT

Why didn't you tell me Barak
was a freak?

SIAM

I swear, Jackie, I didn't --

A walloping backhand knocks Siam sideways.

MIDNIGHT

It's your fucking job to know!

Midnight removes a pocket silk from his Versace jacket.
Dabs the blood from Siam's lip.

MIDNIGHT

Where's Barak now?

SIAM

County lockup.

MIDNIGHT

Listen, Siam. We can't afford
that Arab bastard to roll over
on us.

Midnight touches up Siam's fallen pompadour.

MIDNIGHT

That little deputy sheriff you
keep on your payroll. Any
chance he could slip in a bed
buddy for Barak?

SIAM

For the right price, my guy
would transfer in Charlie
Manson.

Midnight and Siam trade wicked grins.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

A DEPUTY SHERIFF lines up shackled inmates waiting to be
transported out. From the opposite end, a new group of
prisoners are directed in. A tattooed skinhead slips a
steel shank to a ponytailed BIKER.

JAIL CELL

The deputy sheriff unlocks the metal door. Shoves the
biker inside. Barak slowly rises from his bunk bed. He
and the biker exchange dagger stares.

BARAK
(to the deputy)
I was assured I would have a
cell to myself.

DEPUTY SHERIFF
Are you familiar with the
phrase, prison overcrowding?

The deputy unlocks the biker's cuffs.

BARAK
I demand to speak with someone
in your State Department.

DEPUTY SHERIFF
Oh, sure. Just as soon as I
get off the phone with the
United Nations.

The deputy slams the cell door closed. Laughs as he
walks away. The biker unzips his prison jumpsuit down
to his crotch. Eases out the steel shank.

BARAK
I am an extremely wealthy man.
I can pay you a great deal of
money.

BIKER
This debt can only be paid in
blood.

The sharpened metal is thrust at Barak.

The big Arab grabs hold of the biker's arm.

The biker tosses the shank to his other hand.

He stabs Barak in the gut again and again.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - CORNER NEWSSTAND - DAY

Clarisse hops out of a Porsche. Swipes a newspaper off
the rack. She reads the front page intently.

INSERT - NEWSPAPER

Headline reads: "YEMENI DIPLOMAT SLAUGHTERED IN JAIL".

BACK TO SCENE

Clarisse pitches the paper in the gutter.

Hops back in her Carrera.

SMOKES the tires RACING down the street.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The phone RINGS. Rawlins picks up.

RAWLINS

Homicide.

CLARISSE (V.O.)

I have information on a murder.

RAWLINS

You don't say.

CLARISSE (V.O.)

I know who ordered the hit on that Arab diplomat. The one who was killed in jail.

Rawlins pulls a yellow notepad towards him.

RAWLINS

Don't suppose you'd like to tell me your name.

CLARRISE (V.O.)

A sheriff's deputy was in on the setup.

RAWLINS

How about giving me his name?

Clarisse's voice turns shaky.

CLARISSE (V.O.)

I can't. Not now.

RAWLINS
Is there some place we can
meet?

A disturbing silence on the other end of the phone.

RAWLINS
Hey, you still there?

CLARISSE (V.O.)
You know pier thirty-nine?

RAWLINS
Sure. By the Bay Bridge.

CLARISSE (V.O.)
Be there at one a-m.

RAWLINS
How will I know --

The phone line goes dead.

EXT. WATERFRONT - NIGHT

Rawlins anxiously gnaws a toothpick. Eyes a homeless woman picking through a trash can. A two-shot Derringer jams against Rawlins' spine.

CLARISSE (O.S.)
Let me see your shield.
Slowly.

Rawlins dangles his detective's badge over his shoulder.

Hears the hammer UNCOCK.

Rawlins yanks out a .357.

Snatches Clarisse's gun.

RAWLINS
Your turn, cheri.

Rawlins fishes out a wallet from Clarisse's jacket.
Flips to her driver's license.

RAWLINS
Clarisse Wang. So Clarisse,
who wanted Barak dead and why?

CLARISSE
Jackie called the hit.

RAWLINS
Jackie got a last name?

Clarisse looks around nervously.

CLARISSE
Midnight.

Rawlins holsters his nickel-plated Magnum.

RAWLINS
What was Midnight's beef?

CLARISSE
He was afraid Barak was gonna
spill to the cops.

RAWLINS
Spill? About what?

CLARISSE
This was a mistake --

Clarisse walks off. Rawlins pulls her back.

RAWLINS
It's too late for that.

CLARISSE
(beat)
Jackie runs an escort service.
He uses underage girls.

RAWLINS
Like you?

Clarisse diverts her eyes from Rawlins' inquiring gaze.

RAWLINS
So what's your angle?

CLARISSE
Marsha was my best friend.

RAWLINS

Marsha?

CLARISSE

That was Alexis' real name.

RAWLINS

The girl found hacked to death
in Barak's hotel room?

Clarisse withdraws a snapshot of Alexis from her wallet.
She looks at the photo with sad eyes.

CLARISSE

Marsha and me met in high
school. We clicked right from
the start. Mainly 'cause we
both came from fucked-up
families.

RAWLINS

Where did you hook up with
Midnight?

CLARISSE

At his club. The door king
lets in all the P-Y-Ts.

RAWLINS

P-Y-Ts?

CLARISSE

Pretty young things. Underage
girls.

RAWLINS

What's the name of the club?

CLARISSE

The Blue Diamond. Corner of
Manchester and Sycamore. I
gotta go --

Clarisse starts off. Rawlins snags her by the arm.

RAWLINS

I need your help to nail
Midnight.

CLARISSE

And you cops will protect me,
right? Just like you did
Barak.

Clarisse squirms in Rawlins' grasp.

RAWLINS

Listen to me. I can arrange
it Clarisse that after tonight,
Midnight will never be able to
touch you again.

Clarisse stops struggling, but the fear remains in her
eyes.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Blinged-out twenty somethings chat outside the entrance.

Rawlins marches to the head of the line.

A ripped DOOR KING cuts him off.

DOOR KING

Invitation only, pops.

Rawlins sticks his badge in the door king's face.

RAWLINS

Sit on it, punk.

Squad cars SKID to a halt.

Several uniformed cops bail out.

INT. NIGHTCLUB

A HIP-HOP beat rocks the house. Dazzling light effects
excite the crowd. Cops in tow, Rawlins cuts through the
packed dance floor.

UPPER LEVEL SUITE

Kicked back, Midnight speaks Japanese into a cell phone.

The door is BOOTED off its hinges.

Rawlins makes a beeline for Midnight.

Hurls his iPhone across the plush suite.

MIDNIGHT

Oi! That was long distance,
mate.

Rawlins flashes his badge.

RAWLINS

Then I just saved you some
money, mate.

Rawlins unfolds a court document. Reads it aloud.

RAWLINS

Jackson Eugene Midnight...

Two burly cops hoist Midnight to his feet and cuff him.

RAWLINS

... I have a warrant for your
arrest. Conspiracy to murder
of Sheik Walid Ahmed Barak.

MIDNIGHT

Who?

Rawlins chuckles stuffing the warrant in his back pocket.

RAWLINS

Wish I had a buck every time
one of you les Anglais said
that to me.

Rawlins grabs a fistful of Midnight's cashmere sweater.
Drags him out of the luxury suite.

DANCE FLOOR

The cops shove Midnight past the gawking crowd.

Siam leaps over the copper bar.

Runs to Midnight.

Rawlins stiff-arms Siam. Backs him up.

MIDNIGHT
 (to Siam)
 Phone Wolpert. Tell him
 what's going down.

The police haul Midnight unceremoniously out of the club.

EXT. ATHLETIC FIELD - DAY

NICHOLE PRESCOTT, 13, stunning mix of Caucasian and African.

She winds up her lacrosse stick.

Fires a ball into the opposing goal.

The ref WHISTLES the game over.

BLEACHERS

Nichole jumps in Helen's arms.

HELEN
 Way to go, Nikki!

NICHOLE
 That winning goal was for you,
 mom.

HELEN
 In that case, pizza's on me.

NICHOLE
 Sausage and mushroom?

HELEN
 You've got it.

Her cell phone CHIRPS. Helen glances at the caller I.D.

HELEN
 Damn, it's the office.

Helen presses the talk button.

HELEN
 Prescott.

Helen glimpses her watch.

HELEN

Tell him I'll be there in
twenty.

Helen closes her cell. Sees the disappointment in
Nichole's face.

HELEN

I'm sorry, baby. I'll make it
up to you.

NICHOLE

Why is it every time --

Helen puts her arms around Nichole.

HELEN

Let me do this and then we'll
get that pizza. Promise.

Nichole pulls away. Spots her teammate BELINDA and her
father climbing into a minivan.

NICHOLE

If it's okay, I'd like to go
with Belinda and her dad.

Helen brushes Nichole's curly bangs from her hazel eyes.

HELEN

I'll make this up to you,
Nikki.

Slinging her lacrosse stick, Nichole walks off
dejectedly.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

District Attorney GREENBERG lobs an overstuffed folder.
It lands heavily in Helen's lap.

GREENBERG

New case I want you take on.

HELEN

Come on, Arthur, my plate is
already full.

GREENBERG

This case has ramifications.

HELEN

So does the relationship I
have with my daughter.

Greenberg perches on the corner of his cluttered
desk. Cocks his bifocals over his bald head.

GREENBERG

Remember the Yemeni diplomat
who was bumped off in county
detention?

HELEN

I was at the Stanford the
night they arrested him.

GREENBERG

Homicide has put together a
case against a high dollar
pimp named Jackie Midnight.
He allegedly financed the
contract on Barak.

HELEN

Payback for hacking up one of
his girls?

GREENBERG

Nothing that chivalrous.

Greenberg circles his desk. Plops down in a squeaky
chair.

GREENBERG

Midnight wanted Barak six feet
under because he was afraid
Barak would roll over on his
prostitution ring -- in
exchange for deportation.

HELEN

What's the evidence?

GREENBERG

Cops have a C-I in protective
custody. She overheard
Midnight give the order to
whack Barak.

HELEN

Who's the informant?

GREENBERG

One of Midnight's teen-age hookers. It appears that the prostitute Barak sliced and diced was the girl's best friend.

Greenberg reaches into his desk drawer. Digs out a roll of antacids.

GREENBERG

The fallout from this case started the night they wheeled Barak's sorry ass into the city morgue.

Greenberg pops a Tums in his mouth. Chomps on it.

GREENBERG

I've got everyone from the mayor's office to the State Department climbing on my back.

HELEN

And you want me to rescue you.

GREENBERG

You're my top gunslinger.

Greenberg thumps his chest. Forces the antacid to go down.

GREENBERG

Midnight has Dick Wolpert as counsel. You know Quick Dick and his bag of tricks. Wolpert scrounges for any technicality to get his clients off.

(beat)

If Midnight walks, it's going to trigger a political tidal wave.

Cradling the bulging case file, Helen stands up.

HELEN
You're going to owe me, Arthur.

GREENBERG
After this case, two weeks
vacation.

HELEN
Make it three.

GREENBERG
Plea bargaining was always
your strong suit.

Smiling confidently, Helen walks out.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The COURT CLERK hands the JUDGE a folder.

COURT CLERK
(calls out)
Docket number eight-five-seven-
three-nine-two. People versus
Jackson Eugene Midnight.

Flanked by bailiffs, Midnight joins his lawyer WOLPERT,
60, his shabby appearance belies a sharp legal mind.

COURT CLERK
Charge is conspiracy to murder
in the first degree.

Dressed in a power suit, Helen looks up from her notes.
She can't take her eyes off of Midnight.

JUDGE
Mr. Wolpert, how does your
client plead?

WOLPERT
Not guilty, your honor.

JUDGE
Bail application?

Midnight turns toward Helen. There is instant
recognition.

JUDGE

Ms. Prescott?

Helen snaps out of it.

HELEN

People request five million,
your honor.

WOLPERT

Excessive, your honor. My
client has well established
ties to the community, he's a
successful business owner and
is a major contributor to
several local charities,
including S-F-P-D'S Widows'
Fund.

JUDGE

This isn't a canonization,
Mr. Wolpert. Counter,
Ms. Prescott?

HELEN

Mr. Midnight presents a
serious flight risk, your
honor. The defendant
possesses a valid British
passport, as well as owning
residences in Bermuda and the
Virgin Islands.

The judge glances at the folder in front of him.

JUDGE

Bail is reduced to two million.
Defendant will surrender his
passport to the court.

The judge bangs his gavel. Helen and Midnight exchange
one last look as the bailiffs haul him away.

EXT. PENTHOUSE - TERRACE - NIGHT

Ensconced in silk pajamas, Midnight gazes at the
skyscrapers downtown. Armed with a rob roy in each hand,
Siam sidles up. Passes his boss a cocktail.

MIDNIGHT

She knows me.

SIAM

Who knows you?

MIDNIGHT

The assistant district
attorney.

Midnight takes a belt.

MIDNIGHT

She used to work for me.

SIAM

You're kidding. She was your
lawyer?

MIDNIGHT

Hardly. Ms. Prescott used to
turn tricks for a living.

SIAM

Say what?

Midnight looks directly at Siam.

MIDNIGHT

I used to run a stable of
girls back in Scho. A-D-A
Prescott was one of them. Her
street name was Dirty Diana.

SIAM

No shit. Lady Luck just smiled
on you.

Siam shoots his rob roy.

SIAM

You a hundred percent it's the
same chick?

MIDNIGHT

Oh, yeah. She was a platinum
blond when I knew her.

Stroking his trimmed goatee, a wicked smile crosses
Midnight's lips.

MIDNIGHT

Mizzz Prescott used to strut her fine ass around in red and black patten leather.

Midnight inhales deeply.

MIDNIGHT

She wore this positively intoxicating perfume that smelled like fine, mellowed whiskey.

SIAM

Sounds like the johns weren't the ones getting it on with her.

MIDNIGHT

Diana was my number one lady. That's why there's no way I could be mistaken.

Midnight cups his fingers around Siam's smooth chin.

MIDNIGHT

I don't care whose palm you have to grease or who you have to threaten. I want to know everthing there is to know about A-D-A Prescott. Right down to the time of the month she has her period.

INT. UNDERGROUND GARAGE - NIGHT

Toting a briefcase, Helen unlocks the door to her Beemer and slides in.

INT. B.M.W.

Helen inserts the ignition key.

Midnight springs up in the back seat.

Spotting him in the rearview, Helen throws open the door.

Outside, Siam kicks it closed.

MIDNIGHT

'Ello, luv.

Midnight corrals Helen with a chokehold.

She struggles. Reaching and grasping for Midnight.

HELEN

Let me --

MIDNIGHT

Still possess that seething
temper.

Helen stands on the HORN.

Midnight yanks her in the back seat.

MIDNIGHT

Just like ol' times, eh luv?

Midnight tightens his grip around Helen's throat.

MIDNIGHT

Remember the night
you came at me with that
broken champagne bottle?
I still have that scar.

HELEN

Kidnapping an assistant
district attorney --

MIDNIGHT

'Ere now. Who said anything
about kidnapping?

HELEN

Intimidation of an officer of
the court is a class B felony.

MIDNIGHT

Guess you'll have to add that
to my list of charges.

Midnight slowly releases Helen.

She lunges for the door.

Midnight slaps Helen down.

MIDNIGHT

(beat)

You know why I'm here.

Helen tenses up.

Midnight tears open her blouse.

Exposes Helen's bra.

MIDNIGHT

Lavender lace. Funny how some things never change.

Midnight rips open Helen's blouse all the way.

A red heart tattoo marks her pale white shoulder.

Midnight squints at the faded inscription.

MIDNIGHT

Diana loves Derrick. That was my Christian name.

Helen pounces on Midnight.

Pummels him with all she's got.

Siam whips open the car door.

Drags Helen out by her hair.

UNDERGROUND GARAGE

Disheveled, Midnight steps out of the back seat. Looks down at Helen sprawled on the cement floor.

MIDNIGHT

I'll ruin you, Mizzz Prescott.
I'll take you down. Drag your sterling reputation through the shit-filled sewers.

Midnight drops to one knee. Pulls Helen face to face.

MIDNIGHT

When I get finished with you,
bitch, they won't allow you to
clean the public toilets in
this city.

Midnight stands. Straightens his designer jacket.

MIDNIGHT

Lose the case, luv, or say
cheerio to your legal career.

Midnight and Siam hop in a black Jag.

The tires SQUEAL. The car SPEEDS towards Helen.

Helen rolls on her side.

The chrome bumper misses her head by inches.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Her coffee now cold, Helen stares vacantly out the
window. A large male figure looms behind her. Quickly,
Helen turns around. Spills her coffee on Rawlins'
eelskin boots.

RAWLINS

If you don't like my boots,
all you had to do --

HELEN

I'm so...

Rawlins signals a waitress. He slides into the booth
opposite Helen. Rawlins notices the buttons torn from
Helen's blouse.

RAWLINS

You okay?

Helen covers up her exposed lingerie.

RAWLINS

Somebody hurt you?

HELEN

I need someone I can trust.

RAWLINS

We've worked homicide cases
for the past three years. You
know my word means something.

A waitress returns with a pair of coffees. Wipes up the
spill and leaves.

HELEN

I've been assigned the
Midnight case.

(beat)

That bastard is blackmailing
me. He's demanding I stop the
proceedings.

RAWLINS

Are you asking for protection
or my advice?

HELEN

If I refuse to prosecute
Midnight, I could lose my job.
If I throw the case, the D-A
will call me on the carpet and
I'll have to disclose
something that is personally
and professionally
embarrassing.

Rawlins slurps his hot black coffee.

RAWLINS

You're not telling me what
Midnight has on you, but
obviously it's very damaging.

Rawlins leans over the table. Drops his voice.

RAWLINS

One thing I know about
blackmail is that it never
stops. They always up the
ante. Always demand more.
They bleed you dry.
Financially. Emotionally.

HELEN

What you're telling me is that
I'm fucked.

RAWLINS

What I'm recommending is that
you go to trial. Roll the
dice with the jury. Who knows?
You may actually lose.

HELEN

That's the whole point.
I could lose everything.

INT. PENTHOUSE - DAY

The elevator doors open. Gripping a well-worn briefcase,
Wolpert steps out. Some kind of glass is BREAKING in
the other room.

WOLPERT

Jackie?

Whatever the glass is, it keeps SHATTERING.

STUDY

Wolpert sneaks a peak through the doorway.

Midnight heaves Irish crystal against the wall.

WOLPERT

Is it the Chinese New Year?

MIDNIGHT

That bitch!

WOLPERT

You must be referring to A-D-A
Prescott.

MIDNIGHT

She got a judge to subpoena
all of my financial records.
I-R-S agents are at the Blue
Diamond as we speak. They're
hauling away bank statements,
deposit slips --

Midnight SMASHES the last glass in the bar.

WOLPERT

Is that why you summoned me?

MIDNIGHT

She's not backing off, Dick!

Wolpert calmly approaches Midnight.

WOLPERT

Let the A-D-A have her little theatrics. She's reaching at straws.

Midnight paces the high gloss hardwood.

MIDNIGHT

I know what her game is, Dick. Prescott's trying to tie in the receipts from the club to the money I make off the girls.

WOLPERT

She's pissing in the wind sideways. The laundered cash is wired offshore.

MIDNIGHT

You don't think the I-R-S can't figure that out?

WOLPERT

By the time those wingtipped bozos sort through all of the shell companies and trust accounts, you'll be retired in the Caribbean sipping punch 'n' rum. Speaking of...

Wolpert grabs a bottle of Hennessy from the bar. Gawks at the empty glass rack.

MIDNIGHT

I'd offer you a glass...

WOLPERT

When in Rome...

Wolpert uncorks the bottle of cognac. Takes a snort.

WOLPERT

The thing you should be concerned about, Jackie, is who the star witness is for the prosecution.

MIDNIGHT

Who the bloody hell is it?

WOLPERT

I don't know, Jackie. Given your present state of mind --

Midnight grasps Wolpert by his ruffled lapels.

MIDNIGHT

Give me the fucking name!

WOLPERT

Clarisse Wang.

Midnight releases Wolpert. Takes a step back.

MIDNIGHT

Clarisse? What the hell does she know about Barak's murder?

WOLPERT

My source at the D-A's office said Clarisse overheard you give the order for the jailhouse hit.

Wolpert raises the cognac to his lips. Midnight swipes the bottle of Hennessy from him. Sips it himself.

EXT. CANDLESTICK PARK - NIGHT

Juggling baseballs, Siam follows Midnight to home plate.

SIAM

What are we gonna do, Jackie? Practice our fastballs?

Midnight knocks the baseballs out of Siam's hands.

MIDNIGHT

From this point forward, anytime we discuss my case, we do it outside.

Midnight scans the empty rows of seats for eavesdroppers.

MIDNIGHT

I don't trust that A-D-A whore.
She's probably bugged everything
of mine, including the loo.

SIAM

So call her bluff. Put the
word out the assistant
district attorney for
San Francisco used to spread
her legs for money.

MIDNIGHT

The fucking thing is I don't
have any proof!

Midnight kicks the dirt at home plate.

SIAM

No D-V-Ds? Naked pictures?

MIDNIGHT

Nothing!

Midnight wanders into a batting cage.

MIDNIGHT

How the hell was I suppose to
know thirteen years ago, Dirty
Diana was going to earn a J-D
and one day put my black arse
on trial?

SIAM

Gimme the word, Jackie, and
I'll take her bitch ass out.

MIDNIGHT

Wolpert tells me Prescott's
been assigned a twenty-four
hour police escort. Besides,
do you know how much heat
would come down if I put out
a contract on an assistant
district attorney?

Realizing the similiarity of the batting cage to a
prison cell, Midnight quickly steps out.

SIAM

So what's our next move?

MIDNIGHT

Clarisse is the linchpin to
the prosecution's case.
Without her testimony...

SIAM

You walk away scott free.

INT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

U.S. MARSHALLS hustle Clarisse down a corridor.

CLARISSE

I gotta use the little girl's
room.

The male U.S. marshall checks his watch.

U.S. MARSHALL

Make it snappy. You're
scheduled to give testimony in
three minutes.

The female U.S. marshall hustles Clarisse into the
ladies' room.

REST ROOM

Clarisse makes a beeline for a stall.

An elderly Asian woman hobbles in on a cane.

She smiles at the female marshall.

A switchblade slashes the marshall's throat.

BATHROOM STALL

Squatting on the toilet, Clarisse hears a THUD.

CLARISSE

Hey, are you okay?

(beat)

Helloooo?

A stream of blood flows underneath the stall.

Frantic, Clarisse yanks up her panties.

A pair of hands grab her ankles.

They sweep Clarisse off her feet.

REST ROOM

The elderly lady hauls Clarisse out of the stall.

Clarisse pulls at the old lady's hair.

A grey wig comes off in her hand.

CLARISSE

Siam?

SIAM

You're a dead bitch.

Clarisse kicks Siam in the groin.

She bolts for the door.

Siam flings the switchblade. Spears Clarisse in the back.

A loud KNOCK on the rest room door.

U.S. MARSHALL (O.S.)

Hey, everything all right in there?

Weapon drawn, the male U.S. marshall BURSTS IN.

Bloody bodies litter the tile floor.

A sudden NOISE. The marshall swings his gun around.

The venetian blinds rattle in the wind.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

The visitors' gallery is packed. A FEMALE JUDGE glances at the wall clock. Looks impatiently at Helen who is seated at the prosecution's table.

FEMALE JUDGE
Ms. Prescott. Your witness
has delayed court proceedings
now for seventeen minutes.

Helen stands.

HELEN
Your honor, people request --
The courtroom doors BANG OPEN.
The U.S. marshall careens down the aisle.
Helen's eyes flash to Midnight.
He taunts her with a devilish grin.

INT. PENTHOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - NIGHT

Soaking in a marble tub, Midnight and Siam clink
champagne flutes.

MIDNIGHT
I wish you could've seen
Ms. Prescott's face when the
judge threw out my case.

Midnight savors the flavor of his Dom Perignon.

MIDNIGHT
It was a portrait of utter
frustration.

SIAM
Didn't the prosecution have
any, uh...

MIDNIGHT
Corroborating evidence?

SIAM
Yeah, that's it.

MIDNIGHT

It appears in the prosecution's haste to nail yours truly to the cross, they didn't properly depose their star witness. The very recently departed Clarisse Wang.

Midnight punctuates his statement by popping a floating bubble in the bath.

SIAM

What about the cops? Didn't any of them testify?

MIDNIGHT

Out of desperation, Ms. Prescott called some homicide dick who recounted what Clarisse allegedly told him.

Midnight scoots a little closer to Siam.

MIDNIGHT

With absolutely no way to verify the detective's testimony, the judge ruled it as hearsay, and therefore, inadmissable.

SIAM

Now we can move forward with new business.

MIDNIGHT

You know what I always say...

Midnight rests his champagne flute on the edge of the tub.

MIDNIGHT

... pleasure before business.

Midnight lays Siam out with an open mouth kiss.

INT. JAGUAR - DAY

Their eyes focused on a side street, Midnight and Siam look uptight in the front seat.

SIAM

I don't get this, Jackie.

MIDNIGHT

It's called evening the score,
luv. Pure and simple.

Siam aims his intense gaze at Midnight.

SIAM

The judge threw out your case.
The charges were dropped.

MIDNIGHT

The point, Siam, is if you
hadn't prevented dear sweet
Clarisse from testifying,
Ms. Prescott would have
pursued my conspiracy case to
its bitter conclusion.

SIAM

Is that what this is really
about, Jackie? Or does this
go back to Soho? When Diana
walked out on you?

Midnight levels a drop dead stare at Siam.

MIDNIGHT

Don't try to be deductive,
Siam. It doesn't suit you.

The flash of a yellow school bus catches Midnight's eye.
Nichole and her classmate Belinda hop off.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Wielding their lacrosse sticks, Nichole and Belinda lob
a ball to each other.

The black Jaguar RACES up.

Siam bails out wearing a goalie's mask.

He traps Nichole in a bear hug.

BELINDA

Get off of her!

Belinda cracks Siam with her lacrosse stick.

BELINDA

Run, Nikki!

Nichole dashes off.

The Jag SPEEDS in reverse.

Midnight leaps out wearing a Halloween mask.

Aims a gun at Nichole.

MIDNIGHT

You! In the fucking car!

Siam scoops up Nichole from behind.

Crams her in the back seat.

Midnight hops in behind the wheel.

FLOORS IT down the road.

INT. B.M.W. - DAY

Helen steers down her street.

She is confronted by police cruisers. News vans.

EXT. CUL DE SAC

Helen steps out of her car.

Reporters crowd her barking out questions.

Greenberg rushes out of a town house.

Hustles Helen inside.

INT. TOWN HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A police tech connects a data recorder to the house phone. Helen shrugs off Greenberg's grasp.

HELEN

Where's Nikki?

Greenberg hesitates.

HELEN

Damn it, Arthur, tell me where my daughter is!

GREENBERG

The truth is we don't know.

Greenberg picks up a lacrosse stick off the couch.

GREENBERG

A patrol car found this three blocks north of here.

Helen takes the stick from Greenberg.

GREENBERG

There was another girl with Nichole --

HELEN

Belinda. They ride the bus together.

GREENBERG

She told the responding unit two men jumped out of a car and --

HELEN

No!

Helen turns away from Greenberg.

GREENBERG

The men were wearing masks. The girl thinks one of them was black.

Slowly, Helen turns to face her boss.

HELEN

You think it was Midnight?

GREENBERG

Based on the girl's description of the getaway car, it's exotic. Rolls. Jaguar. No I-D on the plates.

HELEN

If the kidnappers were driving a car like that...

GREENBERG

They didn't abduct Nichole for a ransom.

Helen's gaze shifts to the police tech wiring her home phone.

HELEN

If there's not going to be a demand for money, why bother tapping my phone?

GREENBERG

In case Midnight calls. To hear you beg.

EXT. OAKLAND - RUN-DOWN HOUSE - DAY

A parked Bentley with temporary plates looks out of place. Slipping on designer shades, Midnight walks up to the front door and knocks. ESTELLE, 60, white trash, peeks out.

MIDNIGHT

'Ello, Estelle.

ESTELLE

Thought you didn't wanna be seen 'round here in the day.

MIDNIGHT

I was just in the neighborhood.

ESTELLE

Bullshit. You're checking up.

Midnight shoves the front door wide open. Steps inside like he owns the joint.

INT. RUN-DOWN HOUSE

Midnight removes his sunglasses. Observes a couple making out on a soiled couch. Another couple weave up a staircase drunk.

MIDNIGHT

I see business is good.

ESTELLE

Pays the rent.

Estelle squints hard at Midnight through her cigarette smoke.

ESTELLE

Go on. Check her out.

BASEMENT

A bejeweled hand pulls on a dangling cord. A naked lightbulb CLICKS ON. Midnight sees Nichole chained to a hot water tank. A filthy bucket keeps her company.

MIDNIGHT

Not as comfy as your bedroom
at home, is it?

Midnight surveys the black mildew growing on the peeling plaster.

MIDNIGHT

I'll wager you have a poster
of the Jonas Brothers taped
over your bed. Or are you
more the Marilyn Manson type?

Nichole sits motionless on the dank, concrete floor. Anger brews in her hazel eyes. Midnight kneels. Spots a dirty spoon sticking out of a cold can of beans.

MIDNIGHT

Not to fret, luv. You'll be
out of this shithole soon
enough.

Midnight pulls open Nichole's school uniform.

She takes a swing at Midnight.

He snags her fist in midair.

MIDNIGHT

I see you have a temper like
your mother.

Midnight takes a closer look at some marks on Nichole's chest.

MIDNIGHT

How did you get these bruises?

Nichole looks away.

Midnight grabs her chin.

Forces Nichole to look at him.

MIDNIGHT

I don't like asking the same
question twice.

NICHOLE

She did it.

Midnight stands. Heads for a rickety staircase.

NICHOLE

Why?

Midnight turns on his heels.

MIDNIGHT

Beg you pardon?

NICHOLE

Why have you put me here?

MIDNIGHT

Someday you'll have to ask
your mum.

Midnight disappears up the stairs.

BATHROOM

Estelle fires up a crack pipe.

The door BURSTS OPEN.

Midnight latches onto Estelle's greasy hair.

She howls like a tortured alley cat.

KITCHEN

Midnight drags Estelle in screaming.

Dumps her on the food stained linoleum.

ESTELLE

What the fuck --

Estelle climbs to her feet.

Midnight backhands her.

Sends Estelle reeling.

Midnight bends her backwards over the stove.

MIDNIGHT

You bloody -- I paid you to
take care of that girl!

ESTELLE

I am!

MIDNIGHT

Feeding her fucking beans out
out of a can?

ESTELLE

This ain't no goddamn Holiday
Inn!

Midnight cranks the fire on the front burner.

MIDNIGHT

First, the girl gets three hot
meals per day. Second, she
pisses in a toilet, not a bucket.
Third, the light stays on.

Midnight yanks Estelle's ugly mug over the lit burner.

MIDNIGHT

Lastly anyone, I repeat anyone,
beats that girl again, I will
personally hack their fingers
off and shove them down their
fucking throat. Is that clear?

Estelle nods like crazy.

EXT. POLICE STATION - PARKING LOT - DAY

Rawlins reclines in his IROC Camaro munching on a shrimp
poboy. Someone KNOCKS on his T-top. Rawlins peers over
the sports page. Sees Helen.

RAWLINS

(still chewing)

Ms. Prescott.

Rawlins sits up. Turns down the JAZZ on his car stereo.

HELEN

How did a New Orleans boy like
you wind up here?

RAWLINS

You'd have to ask my ex-wife.

Rawlins wipes his mouth with a paper napkin.

RAWLINS

I heard about your daughter.
Any leads?

Helen shakes her head.

RAWLINS

Midnight still the prime
suspect?

HELEN

Judge Freeman issued a search
warrant on Midnight's
penthouse. A sweep of the
residence turned up zip.

Helen leans against the hood of Rawlins' street rod.

HELEN
It's been three days...

Helen struggles to keep the tears at bay.

HELEN
... I'm going insane with
worry.

Rawlins steps out of the car.

RAWLINS
Is there something I can do?

HELEN
I trust your opinion, sergeant.
I was hoping you could
recommend a top flight
detective agency.

RAWLINS
P-Is I've come across couldn't
find their own ass with a
flashlight and a stick.
Pardonne me Francais.

Rawlins places a comforting hand on Helen's shoulder.

RAWLINS
Look, there's an A-P-B out on
your daughter. It's only a
matter of time --

HELEN
Time, Sergeant Rawlins, is one
thing my daughter doesn't have.

Helen storms off.

EXT. SKATEBOARD PARK - DAY

TICO, a wiry latino with sick tats, shoots the halfpipe.
Throws heart stopping stunts. The other skateboarders
high five Tico.

RAWLINS (O.S.)
Guess that scholarship to
Cal Poly never came through.

Tico turns. Sees Rawlins looking cool in dark Raybans.

TICO

Bump those fuckin' tech nerds.
I can run circles around their
bogus firewalls.

Rawlins pulls out a pack of Marlboros. Offers Tico one.
Tico snatches the pack. Leave Rawlins the one.

RAWLINS

Got a job, Tico.

Tico snaps his fingers. Rawlins pulls out a
silver-plated Zippo. Offers it Tico. Thinks twice.
Lights the cigarette himself.

TICO

What's it this time? Crackin'
into your ex's bank account
and wiring out all her dinero?

RAWLINS

Need you to hack into S-B-C's
electronic phone records.

Cigarette dangling from his lips, Tico frisks Rawlins.

RAWLINS

What the hell are you doing?

TICO

Checking you for a wire.
You ain't tryin' to set me up,
are you sarge?

Rawlins strikes up his last Marlboro.

RAWLINS

Lady I work with -- her
thirteen-year-old daughter was
kidnapped a week ago. No one
has seen hide nor hair.

TICO

I feel ya, esse. But what's
that got to do with me hackin'
into Baby Bell?

RAWLINS

Can't get a judge to subpoena
this dude's cell phone records.
He's the money favorite for
snatching the girl.

Thinking, Tico rolls his skateboard with his sneaker.

TICO

Sorry bro, no can do.

RAWLINS

You found religion?

TICO

I know you ain't hip to these
things, but the feds bankroll
these cyber dicks... reformed
hackers. They monitor portal
sites for government agencies
and the Fortune Five Hundred.

Tico takes a long drag.

TICO

These muthas are just lyin' in
wait to back trace a hacker
and I-D him for the F-B-I to
bust.

Tico skates off. Rawlins reels him back.

RAWLINS

What if the girl was Carlota?

TICO

Man, don't be bringin' mi
familia into this.

Tico flips the board with his foot. It lands square in
his hands.

TICO

Need a new board, ya know
homes?

RAWLINS

C-note cover it?

TICO
Shit, maybe the trucks.

RAWLINS
Trucks? Thought we were
talking skateboards.

Tico slings his arm around Rawlins' shoulder.

TICO
Damn hombre, I need to
edjamacate you.

INT. PENTHOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Swirling a cocktail, Midnight watches the Bloomberg Report on a 52" Sony. O.S., a SHOWER stops running. Wrapped in a towel, Nichole walks in. Seeing Midnight, she quickly backs out.

MIDNIGHT
Entres vous.

Reluctantly, Nichole walks back in.

MIDNIGHT
Your clothes are on the bed,
cleaned and pressed.

NICHOLE
What are you going to do with
me?

MIDNIGHT
You, luv, are going on a trip.

NICHOLE
The only place I want to go is
home.

Midnight clicks the T.V. off. Approaches Nichole.

MIDNIGHT
I'm afraid you don't have a
choice.

NICHOLE
You know kidnapping is a
felony.

MIDNIGHT

A born prosecutor, just like
your mum.

Midnight strokes Nichole's cheek.

MIDNIGHT

Too bad you'll never get the
opportunity to be one.

Midnight clenches his fingers around Nichole's innocent
face.

MIDNIGHT

Now be a good brat and get
dressed.

Midnight saunters out. Leaves Nichole trembling.

INT. RUN-DOWN HOUSE - DAY

The front door is KICKED OPEN.

Locked and loaded, Rawlins charges in.

A big ass biker vaults off the couch.

RAWLINS

Sit down!

Another biker sneaks in gripping a kitchen knife.

Rawlins yanks out a second gun.

The biker freezes.

RAWLINS

Estelle Cummings. Where is --

Rawlins feels a shotgun pressed against his lumbar.

ESTELLE

Right here, you piece of --

Rawlins pistol-whips Estelle.

A shotgun BLAST hits the biker on the couch.

The second biker lunges with the knife.

Rawlins cocks and aims his .357.

RAWLINS

You want some?

The biker backs off.

Rawlins cocks the .44 Magnum.

Levels it at Estelle.

RAWLINS

Where the fuck is the girl?

Estelle stonewalls it.

Rawlins pistol-whips her again.

Draws blood from Estelle's sassy mouth.

ESTELLE

She split, goddamnit!

RAWLINS

Where to?

Estelle glares at Rawlins.

Rawlins plasters the muzzle between Estelle's beady eyes.

His forefinger tenses around the trigger.

ESTELLE

All right!

(beat)

Midnight picked her up.

RAWLINS

Where'd they --

ESTELLE

I dunno. Why don't you ask
his faggot girlfriend?

Guns outstretched, Rawlins backs out the way he came in.

INT. IROC CAMARO - DAY

A police flasher rotates on the dash.

Rawlins punches the GAS.

Hits the speed dial on his cell phone.

RAWLINS

(into the phone)

It's Rawlins.

We picked up a dude named Siam.

He's Midnight's enforcer.

Shit!

Rawlins jerks the wheel.

Swerves away from an oncoming truck.

RAWLINS

According to this punk,

Midnight has a meet at the Sky

Cafe at eight tonight.

Rawlins honks the HORN like crazy.

RAWLINS

I'm betting he's got Nichole

with him.

Rawlins tosses his cell. Shifts into HIGH GEAR.

EXT. ROOFTOP RESTAURANT - NIGHT

YAMASHITA, 65, partial to pinstripes and cheap toupees, and his striking FEMALE ASSISTANT sip brandy beneath the stars. Looking breezy in a white linen suit, Midnight swaggers up. Bows slightly.

MIDNIGHT

Konichiua.

Yamashita motions Midnight to sit at the candle lit table. Out of the corner of his eye, Midnight spies a pair of bodyguards lingering at the bar.

MIDNIGHT

I trust you had an enjoyable

flight.

Yamashita responds in Japanese.

FEMALE ASSISTANT

Mr. Yamashita said the champagne was flat and the in-flight movie was a bore.

MIDNIGHT

Actually, Mr. Yamashita said my suit is too flashy and thinks the cops will spot me a mile away.

Midnight says something to Yamashita in Japanese.

MIDNIGHT

(in English)

I hope my Japanese is as good as your English.

Yamashita waves off his assistant. She bows and joins the two bodyguards at the bar.

YAMASHITA

I received the girl you sent to my hotel suite. She's quite lovely.

MIDNIGHT

Her name's Nichole. If you break her in the right way, she will serve you well.

A waiter appears.

MIDNIGHT

Cognac and your finest cigar for the gentleman.

The waiter nods.

MIDNIGHT

You still enjoy a good smoke after dinner, don't you?

YAMASHITA

I was briefed about your recent legal troubles. I presume they will not present an impediment to our proposed business alliance.

MIDNIGHT

The truth is I'm planning to move my base of operations in the next thirty days.

Midnight peruses San Francisco's twinkling skyline.

MIDNIGHT

I'm very fond of the city by the bay, but I've located a more hospitable environment.

YAMASHITA

Where is that, may I ask?

MIDNIGHT

Let's just say where I'm relocating to, the national sport is ice hockey.

The waiter serves up a cognac for Midnight. Yamashita selects a wrapped cigar from a humidor.

MIDNIGHT

Whatever services I can offer from San Francisco, I'll be able to provide from my new location.

Yamashita eases the bourbon soaked cigar between his lips and gestures. A bodyguard trots over. Lights the expensive stogie and leaves.

YAMASHITA

Exactly what are these services?

MIDNIGHT

A steady supply of young and beautiful North American girls to work in your Tokyo bath houses.

YAMASHITA

And the cost?

MIDNIGHT

Forty thousand per.

Yamashita takes a long draw off his cigar. Enjoys the mellow smoke.

YAMASHITA

Allow me to enlighten you,
Mr. Midnight. The going rate,
as these Americans say, is
is twenty thousand per girl.
Thirty thousand if she's a
virgin.

The cigar smoke flowing from Yamashita's mouth and nose
accentuates his demonic features.

YAMASHITA

If the girl is truly unique,
the price is negotiable.
Those little gems I save for
my private auctions.

Midnight leans forward. Drops his voice an octave.

MIDNIGHT

We both know what you get at
bare bottom prices. Slavic
whores with rotten teeth and
heroin tracks.

Midnight knocks back his cognac.

MIDNIGHT

What I trade in, Mr. Yamashita,
is one hundred percent, grade A,
North American pussy. The kind
Japanese men drool over. The
kind Japanese men are willing
to pay top yen for.

Yamashita takes another puff.

YAMASHITA

Twenty thousand per girl.

MIDNIGHT

Thirty-five.

YAMASHITA

My offer is firm.

MIDNIGHT

Thirty thousand.

Yamashita stands.

MIDNIGHT

All right. Twenty thousand.

A bodyguard rushes over. Gently seats his boss.

MIDNIGHT

Twenty thousand and you pick
up the cost of transportation.

YAMASHITA

Then I will accept no girl
over the age of sixteen.

Midnight leans back in his chair. Smiles like a
defeated chess master.

MIDNIGHT

You drive an extremely hard
bargain.

Midnight signals. The waiter reports.

MIDNIGHT

Bottle of D-P. Chilled.

Yamashita's assistant spots Rawlins talking to the maitre'd.
She catches him flashing his badge.

Yammering into a cell, the assistant hurries to her boss.
She yanks him out of his chair.

MIDNIGHT

What the --

RAWLINS (O.S.)

Police! Freeze!

Yamashita's bodyguards OPEN FIRE.

Backing up Rawlins, a S.W.A.T. team returns FIRE.

A bullet clips Midnight. He goes down.

A deafening NOISE blankets the rooftop restaurant.

RAWLINS

(to the S.W.A.T. team)

Chopper!

Customers scatter amidst the intense SHOOT-OUT.

A black helicopter SWOOPS IN.

Unfurls a repel line.

RAWLINS

(to the S.W.A.T. commander)

Cover me!

The S.W.A.T. team lays down heavy GUNFIRE.

Yamashita's bodyguards are riddled with HOT LEAD.

Rawlins sprints towards the Japanese mob boss.

His assistant decks Rawlins with a karate kick.

RAWLINS

Son of a --

A police sniper SHOOTS the female assistant dead.

Rawlins grabs Yamashita's pants leg.

The repel line reels them up to the hovering chopper.

Yamashita kicks Rawlins. Knocks him to the ground.

RAWLINS

(to the S.W.A.T. commander)

Don't shoot! It'll blow!

The black helicopter SOARS OFF into the night.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A uniformed COP stands guard outside an interrogation room. Helen rolls up with a full head of steam. Displays her I.D. The officer doesn't budge.

COP

Sorry, ma'am --

INTERROGATION ROOM

Midnight, Wolpert and D.A. Greenberg sit at a table. They plea bargain back and forth. The door flies open.

Helen pushes past the cop.

GREENBERG

Helen --

She bull rushes Midnight.

HELEN

Where the hell is my daughter?

Midnight flashes a cocky smile.

Helen upends his chair.

Midnight falls smack on his bandaged forehead.

WOLPERT

Counselor!

Wolpert stands.

Helen shoves him back in his seat.

She stares a hole through Midnight.

HELEN

Where is she, you bastard?

Greenberg grasps Helen firmly.

GREENBERG

Out! Now!

CORRIDOR

Greenberg leads Helen away from the interrogation room.

GREENBERG

Just cool off!

HELEN

You are not pleaing out that
piece of garbage.

GREENBERG

Everything is on the table.

Helen stops abruptly.

HELEN

Are you saying you'd actually
cut a deal with Midnight?

GREENBERG

Midnight is a major player in
a child sex trade operation
with international connections.

HELEN

And where does my daughter
factor into this negotiation?

GREENBERG

Believe me, Nichole is part
of the equation.

HELEN

You talk about her like she's
a poker chip at a casino table.

Greenberg pounds his fist against the wall.

GREENBERG

You are too close, Helen, to
be objective!

HELEN

Now who's lost their cool?

Helen starts down the corridor. Quickly turns around.

HELEN

It's always about your career,
isn't it, Arthur? Gaining the
maximum political capital out
of a high profile case.

Helen marches off.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

A towering GUARD escorts Helen past catcalling inmates.
They stop at the last cell.

GUARD

You've got five minutes.

HELEN

Thank you.

The guard leaves. Helen observes Midnight doing handstand pushups against his cell wall.

HELEN

Still trying out for the olympic team?

Midnight hops to his feet.

MIDNIGHT

I would've made one hell of a gymnast. But when you're bounced from one orphanage to another, no one gives a shit about your dreams.

Helen looks around. Slides a package of candy through the bars. Midnight grins widely.

MIDNIGHT

Rollos?

HELEN

Used to be your favorite.

MIDNIGHT

Christ, I haven't had these since...

HELEN

Since we were together?

For the first time, Midnight looks at Helen without animosity.

MIDNIGHT

I miss those halcyon nights we used to spend at my flat in Scho.

Midnight grasps the bars.

MIDNIGHT

Getting high on champagne and weed and rocking the bloody hell out of that waterbed.

Midnight leans close to Helen's face.

MIDNIGHT

When you're all alone... in
the quiet of your bedroom.
Do you ever think back to
those good times we shared?

HELEN

There's a lot of things,
Jackie, I remember about our
life together.

Helen smiles.

HELEN

Some of them were good.
(beat; seriously)
I need to know where Nichole
is.

Helen wraps her fingers around Midnight's who still
clutches the iron bars.

HELEN

I'm begging you, Jackie.
She's all I have.

Midnight pulls away. Tears open the package of Rollos.
Pops a chocolate caramel in his mouth.

MIDNIGHT

What's in it for me?

HELEN

That's up to the D-A.

MIDNIGHT

I'm looking at eight to twelve
on child prostitution and a
flat fifteen on kidnapping.

HELEN

Sentence to be served
concurrently with the
possibility of a third off for
good behavior. That's a deal.

MIDNIGHT

Deal, hell. That's more than
an ax murderer gets.

Midnight pops another candy. Chews it smugly.

MIDNIGHT

Unless you can convince your
boss to do better, I'll take
my chances with a jury.

HELEN

You think you hold all of the
trump cards, don't you?

Helen presses her face against the steel bars.

HELEN

Nichole is your daughter,
Jackie.

Midnight chokes on his candy.

MIDNIGHT

Christ, you do pull out all
of the stops, don't you luv?

HELEN

I was pregnant when I left you
in London.

MIDNIGHT

Even if that were true, any
one of your fucking johns
could've gotten you knocked up.

Helen slips a small snapshot of Nichole from her power
suit. Extends it through the bars.

HELEN

If you had bothered to take a
look, you would've noticed
Nichole has your hazel eyes.
Your smile. She even has a
small mole on the back of her
left knee... just like you.

MIDNIGHT

You don't honestly expect me
to buy any of this rubbish,
do you?

HELEN

Do you want to see Nichole's birth certificate? Her father is listed as Derrick William Sampson. The name you used to go by.

MIDNIGHT

You can get a bloody document to say anything these days.

Realizing Midnight wants no part of Nichole's picture, Helen withdraws it.

HELEN

Nichole is A-B negative. To have that rare blood type, both parents have to be the same. You and I, Jackie, both have it.

The jail guard approaches.

GUARD

Time.

Helen lays Nichole's photograph on the cell door.

HELEN

Keep the picture. It will be the only way you ever see your daughter again.

The guard escorts Helen away. Midnight picks up Nichole's photograph. Stares at it intensely.

INT. APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Rawlins stirs a big pot of gumbo. His eyes are glued to a baseball game on a 12" portable. A KNOCK at the door. Rawlins spills gumbo on his eelskin boots.

RAWLINS

Aye, merde!

Rawlins hops around trying to wipe his boots. He opens the door. Rawlins is confronted by Helen's distraught face.

RAWLINS
Ms. Prescott?

HELEN
I know it's late.

RAWLINS
Come in.

Rawlins draws Helen inside. Closes the door. Helen notices a glob of gumbo on Rawlins' exotic boots.

HELEN
Am I interrupting something?

RAWLINS
Can't seem to keep these boots clean. Please, have a seat.

Rawlins helps Helen out of her rain soaked trench. Seats her in a worn-out Lazyboy.

RAWLINS
Can I get you something?

Helen shakes her head.

RAWLINS
Excuse me a second. I've got a pot going in the kitchen.

Rawlins disappears into the other room. Helen looks around at the humble furnishings. Rawlins returns with a beer. Places a juice glass in front of Helen.

RAWLINS
It's sherry. It'll take the chill off.

HELEN
That's very kind.

RAWLINS
If you stick around, you can sample some of my N'awlins gumbo. Gua-ran-teed to warm your ass -- uh, your bones.

Rawlins stops his babbling with a swig of Heinekens.

HELEN

Midnight refuses to tell me
what he's done with Nichole.

RAWLINS

Have you tried pleaing the
bastard out?

HELEN

Midnight wants to go to trial.
And why shouldn't he? He's
batting a thousand in court.

Helen's eyes well up.

HELEN

All I want... is my baby back.

Helen gives into the tears. Rawlins whips the hand
towel draped over his shoulder. Passes it to Helen.

HELEN

Midnight and I -- we were
lovers a long time ago.
I used to be one of his
hookers.

Looking stunned, Rawlins takes a sip of beer.

HELEN

It gets better. Nichole is
our daughter.

Rawlins spits his drink.

RAWLINS

Pardonne moi.
(beat)
Does Midnight know?

HELEN

I told him today. He thought
it was a ploy.

Helen eases back in the Lazyboy. Tastes her sherry for
the first time.

RAWLINS

You asked me once how I wound
up here. In San Francisco.
Janis, my ex. She abducted my
son Charlie when he was six.

Helen sits up.

RAWLINS

I followed her trail for eight
years through Texas, Arizona,
Utah.

Rawlins takes a long swig of beer.

RAWLINS

I finally caught up with Janis
in some fleabag over in
Potrero Hill. She had been
dead three days from a heroin
overdose.

HELEN

Where was your son?

RAWLINS

Nowhere to be found.

Rawlins lifts a small framed picture off the coffee
table.

INSERT - PHOTOGRAPH

Rawlins' son flashes a big smile wearing his Cub Scout
uniform.

BACK TO SCENE

RAWLINS

A year and a half ago, I was
called down to the city
morgue at two in the morning.
A fourteen-year-old boy had
been wheeled in with multiple
gunshot wounds.

Rawlins eyes the photograph forlornly.

RAWLINS

They ran the kid's prints
through Missing Children.
They were Charlie's.

Rawlins knocks out the remains of his beer.

RAWLINS

Seems Charlie was living on
the streets. Boosting cars.
Selling them off for parts.
Last set of wheels he ripped
off belonged to a drug dealer.

Rawlins carefully returns his son's picture to the table.

RAWLINS

Damn dealer took his own
justice.

HELEN

I'm so sorry.

Leaning forward, Helen accidentally spills sherry on
Rawlins' boots. Laughing, they both reach for the towel.
Their hands touch. Their eyes lock. Their lips slowly
kiss.

BEDROOM

Curtains float in a cool breeze. Helen lies naked in
Rawlins' muscular arms. A cell phone CHIRPS. Helen
awakens. Rummages through her discarded clothes.

HELEN

(into a cell phone)

Yes?
When?

Helen squints at her watch in the moonlight.

HELEN

I'll be there as soon as I can.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - HOLDING CELL - NIGHT

Midnight and his attorney Wolpert sit at opposite ends.
The tension is palatable.

The cell door rolls back electronically. Clad in a wrinkled skirt and blouse, Helen steps in.

WOLPERT

This meeting, counselor, is
entirely --

MIDNIGHT

(to Wolpert)

Piss off!

Wolpert leaves in a huff. The cell door slams behind him.

MIDNIGHT

Sit down.

Helen remains standing. Midnight's face looks like he hasn't slept for a month.

MIDNIGHT

I believe you. I believe
Nichole is my daughter.

Helen drops into a wooden chair.

HELEN

Where's my baby?

MIDNIGHT

The Yakuza have her.

HELEN

Oh, my God.

Helen buries her face in her hands. Midnight kneels in front of Helen. He wants to touch her, but doesn't know how.

MIDNIGHT

Forgive me, Helen.

Helen focuses on Midnight.

The sadness in her eyes turns to rage.

Helen strikes Midnight with a resounding slap.

Midnight climbs to his feet. Checks his dental work.

MIDNIGHT

You will never get Nichole
back without my help.

HELEN

Give me a name and I'll file a
motion for extradition with
the State Department.

MIDNIGHT

Kenji Yamashita. He's boss of
the Golden Dragons. His
contacts in the Japanese
government are extremely high
up the food chain.

HELEN

If formal channels don't work,
there are other options.

MIDNIGHT

Such as?

HELEN

In ninety-seven, the F-B-I
dispatched a tactical team to
a remote province in Pakistan.
They nabbed Mir Aimal Kanshi.
He was wanted for
assassinating two C-I-A
employees outside of Langley.

Midnight soaks up the rising sun through a barred window.

MIDNIGHT

Word is Yamashita lives on
a fortified private estate.
His security is supposed to
rival any military base.

Midnight turns back to Helen.

MIDNIGHT

Even if a tactical team could
locate Yamashita, they'd be
looking at World War Three
trying to arrest him.

HELEN
So I'm just supposed to write
off my daughter?

Helen gets in Midnight's face.

HELEN
I swore to myself Nichole
would never, ever have to sell
her body the way I did.

Helen grabs Midnight by his orange jumpsuit.

HELEN
How can you sleep at night
knowing countless men could be
using your daughter as --

Helen spots a jailhouse guard walking past the cell.
She releases Midnight. The guard continues his patrol.
Midnight leans in the corner. Weighs his options.

MIDNIGHT
You've got to get me out of
here.

HELEN
What?

MIDNIGHT
I can go where cops and
government agents can't.
I put Nichole where she is.
It's my responsibility to
bring her back.

HELEN
Do you know what you're asking
of me? To put up my career
and everything I've busted my
tail for as collateral for
your freedom.

Helen searches Midnight's bedroom eyes for the truth.

HELEN
Say I get you out. What's
preventing you from just
skipping?

MIDNIGHT

Like you said. Nichole is my
daughter too.

INT. CAMARO - NIGHT

Helen and Rawlins watch a steady stream of headlights
crossing the Golden Gate.

RAWLINS

You really believe if you
spring Midnight, he'll bring
your daughter back?

HELEN

It's the only option I --

Hi-beams from another car light up the Camaro. Helen
and Rawlins look around. The other car drives on.

HELEN

The State Department said they
would file a formal inquiry
with the Japanese government
as to Nichole's whereabouts,
but that's the extent of it.

Helen looks up at a haunting moon shining down on the
bay.

HELEN

The fact is, with all of the
publicity connected with
my daughter's kidnapping,
Yamashita may decide...

Helen turns her tired gaze towards Rawlins.

HELEN

... simply to get rid of
Nichole.

RAWLINS

I've been where you're at.
Not knowing what's happened
to your child is worse than
burying them.

Rawlins slips his hand around Helen's.

RAWLINS

Whatever you need me to do.

INT. COUNTY JAIL - DAY

Wearing a deputy sheriff's uniform, Rawlins strolls in. Slides a document under the nose of the DESK SERGEANT. He peers over his bifocals at Rawlins.

DESK SERGEANT

This prisoner isn't scheduled for transfer.

RAWLINS

Order came down from the D-A's office. Seems somebody's got their panties tied in a knot.

The desk sergeant shoots Rawlins a piercing stare. Rawlins maintains his Big Easy cool.

DESK SERGEANT

Goddamn D-A. He thinks every time he farts, we're all supposed to jump.

RAWLINS

Tell me about it. I was supposed to be sitting down to a Giants' game half an hour ago.

The desk sergeant presses a button on an intercom.

DESK SERGEANT

Hey, Freddie. Prep prisoner seven-two-four-nine for transfer.

MINUTES LATER

An overweight guard escorts Midnight by a shackle belt. Hands him over to Rawlins. Holding his breath, Rawlins leads Midnight to the exit. The phone RINGS. The desk sergeant picks up.

DESK SERGEANT

(to Rawlins)

Hey, hold it!

Sweat rolling off his brow, Rawlins slowly does an about-face.

DESK SERGEANT

You forgot to sign him out.

RAWLINS

Must be thinking about that Giants' game.

Rawlins signs the form. Grabs Midnight. The two double time it out the door.

EXT. COUNTY JAIL - PARKING LOT

Rawlins shoves Midnight into his souped-up Camaro. A MOTORCYCLE COP rumbles in on his police issue Harley. Watching with disbelief, Rawlins just rolls his eyes. Quickly, Midnight ducks down in the front seat.

MOTORCYCLE COP

Rawlins!

RAWLINS

Whadaya say, Al?

The motorcycle cop gives Rawlins the once-over.

MOTORCYCLE COP

Since when you've been working sheriff's detail?

Rawlins glances at his Timex.

RAWLINS

Since about twenty minutes ago.

Rawlins hops in his Camaro. PEELS OUT.

EXT. ROOFTOP GARAGE - NIGHT

An IROC Camaro swings up to Helen who paces in front of her B.M.W.

Midnight and Rawlins hop out.

HELEN

You're late.

RAWLINS

We stopped for beignets and coffee.

HELEN

(to Midnight)

Your clothes are on the front seat.

MIDNIGHT

You remembered I only wear cashmere or silk.

HELEN

They're from Good Will. Don't get your hopes up.

Helen tosses some personal documents on the hood.
Midnight changes on the other side of the car.

HELEN

Your new passport and driver's license. You'll be traveling under the name George Okumbu.

MIDNIGHT

Listen, luv. There's no way I'm passing for a bleedin' Nigerian.

HELEN

Just fake it!

Helen checks her watch.

HELEN

And hurry up. We have less than half an hour to make our flight.

MIDNIGHT

We?

HELEN

As in you and me.

Rawlins flaps an airline ticket.

RAWLINS
And one more makes three.

HELEN
(to Rawlins)
You're not going.

MIDNIGHT
(to Helen)
Neither are you.

HELEN
Nichole is my daughter.

MIDNIGHT
She's my daughter too.

Rawlins waves his arms in the air.

RAWLINS
Kid! Kids!
(to Midnight)
You. Finish getting dressed.
(to Helen)
You... need to chill.

Rawlins pulls Helen aside.

HELEN
You can't --

RAWLINS
I've already cleared the time
off. End of discussion.

MIDNIGHT
Ah, Christ!

Helen and Rawlins spin around. Midnight checks out his tweed suit and plaid bow tie in the Beemer's side view.

MIDNIGHT
I look like a right wanker in
this get-up.

Helen shoves a pair of heavy framed glasses on Midnight.

HELEN

Now that's what I call styling.

Helen and Rawlins burst out laughing.

INT. TOKYO - HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Lugging their own bags, Midnight, Helen and Rawlins shuffle in. Someone flicks on the lights. The room is a certified dump.

MIDNIGHT

I take it the Tokyo Radisson was booked.

HELEN

In case you didn't get the memo, this isn't a pleasure cruise.

MIDNIGHT

(mumbles)

More like the highway to hell.

Helen closes the distance with Midnight.

HELEN

What was that?

Rawlins squeezes in between the two. Ushers Helen away.

RAWLINS

You've been chewing nails ever since we left stateside. Something you want to get off your chest?

HELEN

It's just --

The air conditioner starts to WHINE. Helen gives it a shot. Silences it.

HELEN

We wouldn't be going through all of this if it weren't for him.

RAWLINS
You have every right to be
ticked off.

Rawlins glances at Midnight who looks like the odd man
out.

RAWLINS
But he is here... to make
things right.

Rawlins calms Helen down with a stroke of his hand.

RAWLINS
The one thing that should be
foremost in everyone's mind is
that we're all here to bring
Nichole back.

Rawlins steps aside. Leaves Midnight and Helen face to
face.

HELEN
I'm sorry.

MIDNIGHT
Forget it, luv. Water under
the bridge.

Midnight notices the two single beds and a rollaway.

MIDNIGHT
So, who gets the cot?

HELEN AND RAWLINS
You do.

INT. TURBO LANCER - DAY

Rawlins ZIGZAGS through heavy traffic.

Helen hangs onto a Jesus strap.

HELEN
Do you always drive like this?

RAWLINS
Like what?

Rawlins hammers the car HORN.

Helen looks away from the frightening traffic.

HELEN

How do you know this guy?

RAWLINS

J-T? He's an old army bud.
We were both attached to the
Third Armored in Desert Storm.

Helen winces at how close Rawlins shaves the other cars.

HELEN

What makes you think he can
get us what we need?

RAWLINS

Let me put it to you this way.
When we were stationed in Saudi,
if it wasn't bolted, chained
or nailed to the floor, J.T.
sold it on the black market.

INT. BODY SHOP - DAY

The turbo Lancer fishtails in. J.T., a good ol' Georgia boy who went on a military tour and never came back, scopes out the rice rocket. Rawlins and Helen swing out.

J.T.

Well spank my bottom and call
me red. Look at what the cat
drug in.

Rawlins looks for a handshake.

J.T.

Ta hell with that. Gimme a
sound off. One. Two.

Simultaneously, Rawlins and J.T. grab their nuts.

RAWLINS AND J.T.

Ooo-rah!

J.T.
Ya'll remember the last time
we was armpit to armpit?

RAWLINS
Playing cut 'n' chase with
Saddam's tanks on the Kuwaiti
border.

J.T.
Shit, yeah. Gave that ol'
towel head a run for his money,
didn't we?

Helen clears her throat.

RAWLINS
J-T. This is --

HELEN
Diana.

J.T. extends his hand. Realizes it's coated with engine
grime. He just waves.

J.T.
Pleasure, darlin'.

HELEN
I don't mean to rush things...

J.T.
I can see who wears the pants
in your house.

HELEN
Oh no, we're not --

J.T.
Drive her up on the lift.

Looking confused, Helen and Rawlins climb back in the
Lancer. Rawlins eases the hotrod onto a hydraulic lift.
J.T. presses a remote. The car is lowered below ground.
A sliding panel covers the secret opening.

UNDERGROUND GARAGE

A flourescent lights kick on. An arsenal of weapons
line the walls.

Helen and Rawlins slowly step out of the car. A metal door bangs open. J.T. blusters in.

J.T.
Slick as snot, ain't it?
Installed the sonovabitch
myself.

Rawlins checks out the military hardware.

RAWLINS
This place makes the armory at
Camp Pendleton look like a
Toys R Us.

Helen nudges Rawlins.

HELEN
The list?

Rawlins tosses a matchbook to J.T. He flips open the cover. Mumbles as he reads.

J.T.
Machine pistols. Grenade
launcher. Nine millimeter.

J.T. looks up grinning.

J.T.
Sounds like a party.

HELEN
What about a pilot?

J.T.
Lieutenant Calvin Nakamura.
U-S Army Air Corp retired.
He's flown Apaches from Bosnia
to Bagdad.

J.T. scoops out chewing tobacco from a can. Wedges it between his cheek and gum.

J.T.
Crazy Cal his squadron used to
call him.

Helen's face drops.

HELEN

Why was that?

J.T.

Legend has it, Crazy Cal used to lead formation into battle flying upside-down. Supposedly to freak out enemy ground troops.

J.T. spits brown tobacco juice on the floor. Wipes his mouth with his shirt sleeve.

J.T.

If ya ask me, I think ol' Cal did it just for the rush.

Helen and Rawlins exchange worried looks.

INT. PINK SALON - NIGHT

A shapely hostess sashays in rhythm to hypnotic DANCE MUSIC. Midnight trails close behind. His eyes strain through the seductive lighting. Glimpses a variety of sexual encounters in leather booths.

OFFICE

Reclining in a chaise lounge, MADAM KIARA, a proper British accent belies her raunchy business, receives a pedicure. A KNOCK at the door.

MADAM KIARA

Hai?

The hostess opens the door which is emblazoned with a golden dragon. She motions Midnight in. Madam Kiara eyes Midnight with a look of familiarity.

MADAM KIARA

(in English)

You must be Mr. Midnight.

MIDNIGHT

And you're undoubtedly Madam Kiara.

MADAM KIARA

Please, make yourself comfortable.

Midnight eases into a Louis XIV chair. Madam Kiara dismisses her pedicurist.

MADAM KIARA

Your accent. You are from London originally.

MIDNIGHT

Quite right. And you?

MADAM KIARA

I was raised in Hong Kong when the British governed it.

A beautiful geisha quietly enters carrying a Japanese tea set. She meticulously prepares two cups for pouring.

MADAM KIARA

My assistant informs me you have a special request.

MIDNIGHT

I'm looking for Kenji Yamashita.

MADAM KIARA

Why do you presume I know this gentleman?

MIDNIGHT

Because you work for him.

The geisha politely offers Midnight some steaming green tea. Madam Kiara waves her off.

MADAM KIARA

What is the purpose of your visit to Tokyo, Mr. Midnight?

MIDNIGHT

Mr. Yamashita and I have some unfinished business.

MADAM KIARA

Unfinished business? Odd you should say that.

Madam Kiara sits up. The geisha slips a pair of fancy slippers onto her boss' freshly pedicured feet.

MADAM KIARA

I lived in London back in the mid nineties. I operated a very profitable brothel.

Madam Kiara stands. Walks over to a beautiful teak desk.

MADAM KIARA

One summer night, the bobbies discovered one of my girls slashed from ear to ear behind a club in Soho.

Madam Kiara turns her back to Midnight. She picks up a hara kiri knife from a display stand. Slips it into the sleeve of her silk robe.

MADAM KIARA

Apparently, the girl Lenora made the mistake of working the wrong side of the street.

Midnight fidgets with his cup of tea. Bearing an icy stare, Madam Kiara slowly approaches.

MADAM KIARA

Although it was never proven, Scotland Yard suspected a local pimp of committing the grizzly murder.

Madam Kiara stands before Midnight. Her look alone could kill.

MADAM KIARA

That pimp went by the name of Sampson --

A blade slashes Midnight's cheek.

Midnight splashes the hot tea in Madam Kiara's face.

The geisha stabs him with her pointy hair spike.

Midnight decks the geisha with one punch.

MIDNIGHT
(to Madam Kiara)
Finish it, bitch!

Madam Kiara cuts the air with the razor sharp knife.

Midnight kicks her in the stomach.

She falls backwards onto her desk.

Midnight hops up. Straddles Madam Kiara.

MIDNIGHT
Yamashita brought a girl back
from the U-S. Curly hair.
Half black, half white. Where
is she?

Midnight wrenches the knife from Madam Kiara.

Presses the shiny blade against her ghost white throat.

MIDNIGHT
You want to wind up like that
fucking whore in Scho?

MADAM KIARA
The girl is on his estate.

MIDNIGHT
Where the hell is that?

Madam Kiara glares defiantly.

Midnight drags the blade across her neck.

Blood trickles from the glancing incision.

Madam Kiara writhes in pain.

MIDNIGHT
I don't like asking the same
question twice.

MADAM KIARA
Yamashita's estate lies in the
shadow of Mount Mitake.
Eighty kilometers west of the
city.

MIDNIGHT

What does Yamashita intend to do with the girl?

MADAM KIARA

He will auction her off. Wealthy men in the market for sex slaves.

Midnight wedges the knife between Madam Kiara's breasts.

MIDNIGHT

Make you a deal, luv. You don't tell Yamashita I was here...

Midnight stakes the knife into the teak desk. Inches from Madam Kiara's frightened face.

MIDNIGHT

... I won't tell him you gave him up.

Midnight climbs off Madam Kiara.

Yanks the hair spike out of his deltoid.

Blood seeps from his face and arm.

Midnight struts his stuff on the way out.

EXT. ESTATE - GARDEN - DAY

Clad in a crisp smock, Yamashita paints an abstract of Mount Mitake in the distance. An OLDER GEISHA glides across the decorative brick. She humbly bows.

YAMASHITA

(in Japanese)

Yes?

OLDER GEISHA

(in Japanese)

The American girl is ready.

YAMASHITA

(in Japanese)

Bring her to me.

The geisha bows. Returns with Nichole dressed in a white kimono and honeysuckle laced through her hair. With a discerning eye, Yamashita inspects every inch of Nichole.

YAMASHITA

(in English)

Positively exquisite.

Yamashita cups Nichole's chin in his hand. Nichole rears her head like an untamed Mustang. Yamashita slaps her face back and forth.

YAMASHITA

(in Japanese; to the geisha)

She needs more discipline.

Yamashita coldly stares at Nichole, but continues to speak to the matronly geisha.

YAMASHITA

(in Japanese)

I want her ready by tomorrow night.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Neon lights from the Ginzu strip shine through the window. Midnight, Helen and Rawlins sit on a bed. Aerographical photos are scattered across the comforter.

RAWLINS

Armed guards check in every guest at the entrance gate.

HELEN

That's problem number one. None of us have an invitation.

RAWLINS

Believe me, cheri, that's the least of our worries.

Rawlins hops his finger from picture to picture.

RAWLINS

An electrified fence topped with razor wire surrounds the perimeter. In addition, there are K-nine units roaming the grounds twenty-four-seven. Here, more armed guards patrol the estate in souped-up golf carts.

MIDNIGHT

What's security like inside the mansion?

RAWLINS

I don't have intel on that.

Helen turns to Rawlins.

HELEN

What happened to our pilot? He was supposed to sit in on this.

RAWLINS

Seems after Crazy Cal took these aerial photos, he crash-landed his chopper in a hotel pool. Tokyo P-D arrested him on a D-W-F.

HELEN

D-W-F?

RAWLINS

Drunk while flying.

HELEN

Just great.

RAWLINS

J-T's bailing him out as we speak.

Midnight rises from the bed. Checks the bandage on his face in the mirror.

MIDNIGHT

Say we're lucky enough to get inside the mansion. How do we get Nichole out?

RAWLINS

Since you were the one who gave Nichole to Yamashita, it would look suspicious if you tried to bid on her.

MIDNIGHT

So what's Plan B?

RAWLINS

Simple. Watch for the first opportunity to snatch Nichole and hightail it out of there.

MIDNIGHT

Past the guards. Past the dogs. And over the razor wire.

HELEN

That's assuming our pilot will be out of detox by then.

Helen slides closer to Rawlins. Her expression turns serious.

HELEN

This is as far as you go.

RAWLINS

Excusez moi?

HELEN

I can't ask you to risk your life for my daughter.

Rawlins takes Helen's hand in his.

RAWLINS

I told you about my son. I couldn't help Charlie, but I can help Nichole.

Rawlins strokes the worry lines from Helen's face.

RAWLINS

Besides, I don't trust you alone with your old boyfriend.

Midnight, Helen and Rawlins trade wary looks.

The three of them break into laughter.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

Helen picks nervously at her frilly evening gown. A black on white Maybach cruises up. Helen opens the passenger door.

INT. MAYBACH

Styling in a tux, Midnight smiles as Helen climbs in.

HELEN

Nice ride.

MIDNIGHT

It's a loaner from J-T's chop shop.

Midnight's eyes wander all over Helen's classy chassis.

HELEN

What?

MIDNIGHT

If I knew you looked that good all fancied up, I would've charged your johns double the rate.

Helen playfully slaps Midnight. She looks around.

HELEN

Where's Rawlins?

The back seat plops down. Rawlins pokes out his camouflaged face.

RAWLINS

There's more room in this trunk than my whole Camaro.

HELEN

What are you doing in there?

RAWLINS

Yamashita knows me. I gotta keep it on the down-lo.

Rawlins pulls the rear seat back into place. Midnight gives it the gas.

EXT. ESTATE - NIGHT

The Maybach steers up to a massive iron gate. A stone faced SENTRY emerges from a guardhouse strapped with an Uzi.

INT. MAYBACH

Midnight turns to Helen who looks petrified.

MIDNIGHT

Ready to do this?

Helen barely nods.

MIDNIGHT

Relax, luv. I'll do the talking. You just keep an eye out for Nichole.

Midnight powers down his window. The sentry peers in. Gives Midnight and Helen the once-over.

MIDNIGHT

Be a good bloke and inform Mr. Yamashita that Jackie Midnight is here.

SENTRY

Invitation?

MIDNIGHT

Christ, mate, I've never needed one of those.

The sentry brings up the barrel of his submachine gun.

SENTRY

You must go.

MIDNIGHT

You're not serious, are you?

The guard racks a bullet in the chamber.

Midnight glimpses a security camera recording the encounter. He purposely leans his head out of the car.

MIDNIGHT

When your boss asks me why I
didn't attend his party, I'll
be sure to tell him it was
because of the fuck-ass
working the front gate.

Midnight shifts the luxury sedan in reverse.

SENTRY

Wait!

Pressing a walkie-talkie, the sentry rattles off something in Japanese. Without warning, the huge iron gate rolls back. Eyeing Midnight suspiciously, the sentry waves him through.

INT. MANSION - BALLROOM - NIGHT

Midnight and Helen file in with the other high rollers. Puffing on a Cuban, Yamashita segues over.

YAMASHITA

My security informed me that
an arrogant Englishman had
crashed my little soiree.

Midnight and Yamashita exchange bows.

YAMASHITA

What happened to your face?

MIDNIGHT

I sat too close to the chef at
Benny Hannas.

Ignoring the joke, Yamashita shifts his attention to Helen.

YAMASHITA

And who is your ravishing
companion?

MIDNIGHT

This is Diana.

YAMASHITA

Welcome, Diana. I hope tonight's festivities will be to your liking.

HELEN

I can't wait for them to begin.

Yamashita gestures. A waiter arrives with a silver salver of champagne. Midnight and Helen each sample a glass.

YAMASHITA

I was confident you would not remain in police custody very long.

MIDNIGHT

Isn't that why we pay our attorneys an obscene retainer?

Midnight and Yamashita chuckle.

MIDNIGHT

I was hoping we could move forward with the business arrangement we discussed in San Francisco.

YAMASHITA

You are still in a position to fulfill your end of the agreement?

MIDNIGHT

Absolument!

O.S., someone bangs a GONG.

YAMASHITA

It is time. We will chat later, my friend.

Midnight and Helen seat themselves with the other GUESTS. The house lights dim except for a single spotlight. Yamashita appears on a fashion runway holding a portable mike.

YAMASHITA

I would like to welcome each and every one of you to this evening's event. To begin tonight's auction, I am extremely pleased to present a true exotic beauty from the United States.

A second spotlight illuminates Nichole. She is dressed in a white satin wedding gown. In measured steps, Nichole walks the length of the runway. Helen lunges from her seat. Midnight snaps her back in her chair.

YAMASHITA

Bidding will start at fifty thousand U-S.

INDIAN GUEST

Fifty-five thousand.

ASIAN GUEST

Sixty thousand.

GERMAN GUEST

Sixty-five thousand.

Helen rises. Midnight pulls her down. He shoots Helen a stern look.

MIDNIGHT

(lowers his voice)
You are going to get us killed.

HELEN

You can't expect me --

Midnight clamps down on Helen with a tight grip.

MIDNIGHT

Listen to me. We've made it this far. For Chrissakes, don't blow it.

YAMASHITA

Presently, the bid is at eighty thousand. Do I hear eighty-five?

RUSSIAN GUEST
One hundred and fifty thousand!

The crowd chats excitedly.

YAMASHITA
Excellent. Do I hear a
challenge bid?

The conversation amongst the guests quiets down.

YAMASHITA
One hundred and fifty thousand
dollars. Going once. Going
twice.

The spotlight swings over to a fat Russian in a tight
tuxedo.

YAMASHITA
Sold to the gentleman from
Moscow!

A polite golf clap signals the crowd's approval.

UPSTAIRS

Midnight twists a silencer onto a Glock 17.

He SHOTS OUT a security camera in the ceiling.

Midnight and Helen creep down a hallway.

They press their ears against each door they pass.

BEDROOM

Gagged and naked, Nichole wrestles in a canopy bed. Her
wrists and ankles are tied spread-eagle. The fat
Russian waddles out of the bathroom in a Turkish towel.
The door is KICKED OPEN. Midnight charges in.

RUSSIAN GUEST
(in Russian)
Who the fuck --

Midnight cracks him in the forehead with the gun.

The Russian collapses like a bad soufflé.
Nichole freaks out when she sees Midnight.
Helen rushes in.

HELEN

It's okay, baby! He's here to help!

Midnight whips out a butterfly knife.
Nichole's eyes pop wide open.
Midnight slashes the ropes that bind her.
He then reaches for a window.

MIDNIGHT

Damn it!

HELEN

What's wrong?

MIDNIGHT

The bloody windows are alarmed.
We can't go out this way.

HELEN

We sure as hell can't go out
the front door.

A grappling hook CRASHES through the window.
A deafening ALARM rings out.

MIDNIGHT

Well, that decides it.

Midnight whips off his tux jacket.
Tosses it to Nichole.

MIDNIGHT

Out the window. Now!

The fat Russian sits up.
Midnight kicks him in the head. K.O.s him again.

A guard enters. SPRAYS the room with an Uzi.
The Glock CHATTERING, Midnight splatters the guard.

EXT. MANSION

Helen, Nichole and Midnight slide down a rope.
Yamashita's guards SPEED at them in hotrod golf carts.
Rawlins FIRES a grenade launcher.
BLOWS the guards to hell and back.

MIDNIGHT
Where's the chopper?

RAWLINS
The pilot never showed.

MIDNIGHT
Shit. Get in the car!

The foursome sprint to the Maybach and jump in.
Midnight GUNS the engine.
RACES down the driveway.

INT. MAYBACH

Helen lays on top of Nichole in the back seat.
Rawlins hangs out the window.
Cuts loose with a pair of MACHINE PISTOLS.
The front windshield SHATTERS from RETURN FIRE.

MIDNIGHT
Hang on!

The Maybach RAMS the massive front gate.
Iron bars bend, but don't break.
The big sedan is jolted backwards.

Dazed and bleeding, Midnight sits up.

MIDNIGHT

Who's alive?

A tie-dyed chopper ZIPS through the evening sky.

It's flying UPSIDE-DOWN.

HELEN

What the hell was that?

MIDNIGHT

I think that was our air support.

Helen looks around.

HELEN

Where's Rawlins?

Helen scans the grounds.

Rawlins is lying face down in the grass.

Helen kicks the jammed door.

No luck.

EXT. ESTATE

Helen crawls out the rear window.

Hurries over to Rawlins.

Guards in a Hummer FIRE at the chopper.

The intense BARRAGE keeps the big bird from landing.

INT. MAYBACH

Midnight turns to Nichole who is in the back seat.

MIDNIGHT

You need to get out, Nichole.

Nichole witnesses the fear in Midnight's eyes. She doesn't move.

MIDNIGHT

It's okay, luv. Now push off.

Following her mom, Nichole squeezes out the rear window.
Midnight tries CRANKING the stalled engine.

EXT. ESTATE

Helen runs past her daughter.

Scrambles across the hood of the Maybach.

HELEN

(to Midnight)

What are you doing?

MIDNIGHT

Stay with Rawlins.

Helen reaches through the car window.

Locks down on the steering wheel.

HELEN

No, Jackie. We all leave
together.

MIDNIGHT

Unless that chopper lands,
we're all dead.

Midnight finally REVS the V-12.

He wrestles Helen for the steering wheel.

Midnight shoves Helen on her ass.

HELEN

Jackie --

MIDNIGHT

Take care of our daughter!

The Maybach SPEEDS in reverse on sparking rims.

EXT. DRIVEWAY

The guards SHOOT-UP the big sedan.

The Maybach WHINES as it builds up SPEED.
Smoking and hissing, the sedan SLAMS into the Hummer.
A massive EXPLOSION. The night sky lights up.

HELEN

Oh, my God!

The chopper DIVES through the orange fireball.
Quickly touches down.

NICHOLE

Mom!

Helen pulls her eyes away from the burning wreckage.
Sees her daughter struggling to lift Rawlins.

HELEN

Hold on!

Helen sprints to her daughter.
MACHINE-GUN FIRE chops at her heels.
CRAZY CAL cuts loose with a ROCKET LAUNCHER.
BLOWS UP a golf cart teaming with guards.

CRAZY CAL

(to Helen and Nichole)

Move it!

Helen and Nichole drag Rawlins into the chopper.
A spray of BULLETS tattoo the side of the Huey.
Crazy Cal sticks his middle finger out of the cockpit.
The chopper TAKES OFF like a bat out of hell.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO - PIER - DAYS LATER

Helen slides her arm around Nichole.

Mother and daughter watch the boats sail peacefully on the bay.

NICHOLE
It's still hard to believe
Midnight was really my dad.

Nichole looks at her mom.

NICHOLE
He never hurt me.

HELEN
I know that, baby.

NICHOLE
What was my father like when
you knew him?

A faint smile graces Helen's lips.

HELEN
Believe it or not, your dad
always knew how to make me
laugh. Jackie could also be
very thoughtful and sensitive.

NICHOLE
Sounds like you loved him.

HELEN
I did. A very long time ago.

Helen plays with Nichole's curly locks.

HELEN
When I found out I was
pregnant, I wanted your
father to come to
San Francisco with me.

Helen looks away.

HELEN
Jackie wouldn't leave the life
he had in London. Something
dark and deep inside of him
kept him there. It was a
place I couldn't reach him.

Helen turns back to Nichole. Finds her smile again.

HELEN
I will tell you this. If I
had to go through it all over
again -- I would.

Helen hugs her daughter.

HELEN
Because I have you.

Rawlins shows up with a trio of ice cream cones.

RAWLINS
Who had the rocky road?

Nichole waves. Takes the cone.

RAWLINS
(winks)
Wild cherry for the lady and --

HELEN
Let me guess. Pralines and
cream?

RAWLINS
Give the lady a see-gar.

Rawlins licks his cone.

RAWLINS
Had this crazy idea.

HELEN
I like crazy ideas.

RAWLINS
Seeings how we both lost our
jobs, I thought about us
moving to N'awlins and opening
up a bar.

NICHOLE
New Orleans?

RAWLINS

Qui, cheri.

(lays on the Cajun)
That's my home, in case you
can't tell by my accent.

Helen flashes a mischievous grin.

HELEN

I've closed my share of bars
in my time, but I don't know
anything about running one.

RAWLINS

What's to know? I'll mix the
dacquris and hurricanes and
you pass out the free legal
advice.

Rawlins takes Nichole's hand. Twirls her around.

RAWLINS

And you, mon petit femme, will
be the Queen of the Mardi Gras.
How does that sound?

NICHOLE

Do they play lacrosse in New
Orleans?

RAWLINS

No, but there's this thing
they do with a string of beads
down there.

Helen playfully slaps Rawlins.

RAWLINS

What do you say, cheri?

NICHOLE

Sounds like fun.

HELEN

I've always said, life's an
adventure.

Rawlins throws his arms around Helen and Nichole.
Spills a dollop of ice cream on his eelskin boots.
Everyone laughs.

FADE OUT.