

THE FBI'S COMMUNIST

"Pilot"

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THIS IS A WORK OF FICTION, ANY RESEMBLANCE TO REAL PEOPLE,  
LIVING OR DEAD, IS PRETTY FUNNY

TEASER

1 INT. WHARF/STOREHOUSE - NIGHT

1

Black-And-White, 4:3

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The story you are about to see is  
based on the actual records and  
authentic experiences of Jack Novak.

A single light illuminates this dank storehouse, filled with  
*lowlifes* and *socialists*. KONSTANTIN TCHAIKOVSKY (40s,  
Russian as a bear on a unicycle) is their ringleader.

KONSTANTIN

Comrade Novak, you are late, as  
always.

The flickering flame of a cigarette lighter reveals "JACK  
NOVAK" (30s, leading man handsome). He takes a long drag.

"JACK"

We gonna plan this *race riot* or what?

KONSTANTIN

Center has sent word, they fear there  
is a... vole among us.

"JACK"

You mean a mole. Or a rat.

KONSTANTIN

The type of rodent is immaterial,  
what matters is--

Suddenly, the room floods with light! A megaphone-amplified  
voice booms:

MEGAPHONE

This is the **Federal Bureau of  
Investigation!** Cease all activities,  
or we'll cease 'em for ya.

They scatter like roaches as the lawmen bust down the door.  
"Jack" crashes out a nearby window.

2 INT. STREET/PHONEBOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

2

Now on a city street, far from the sirens, "Jack" arrives at a phonebooth. He checks over his shoulder, then dials a number. *Ring ring... a crackle, then a muffled voice:*

HANDLER (O.S.)

Are you alone?

"JACK"

Alone? I'm always alone. That's the price... of being *The FBI's Commun-*

Something hurtles towards the ground behind "Jack," a loud **CRASH** and *shatter*.

"JACK" (cont'd)

*JESUS!*

He jumps out of his skin, crashing into the closed booth door. His weight shifts the booth-- unsecured, it topples to the floor with him in it, landing with a solid *thud*.

"JACK" (cont'd)

What the *fuck* was that?

3 INT. STUDIO - DAY

3

**Color, Widescreen**

We pull out from "Jack," into the real world. A studio light lies shattered on the floor of this hastily-constructed set.

VOICE (O.S.)

Sorry!

"Jack" wriggles his way out of the phonebooth. He's a nervous wreck. He looks at the light on the floor, then looks to the ceiling.

"JACK"

That coulda- that coulda-

He starts to look faint, holds his head between his legs. RON, THE DIRECTOR (50s) approaches.

RON, THE DIRECTOR

You get hit or something?

CARROLL WHITMIRE (30s, still leading man handsome), the actor playing "Jack Novak," pulls his head out from between his knees.

CARROLL  
That coulda killed me.

He looks faint again, shaky.

CARROLL (cont'd)  
I need a-

He pats down his coat, pulling out a cigarette and a lighter. His hands still shaking, he lights up and drags.

RON, THE DIRECTOR  
Wasn't even close to hitting you.  
(Frustrated)  
You know what, let's wrap. It'll probably take crew til the end of the day to clean it up anyway.

Carroll nods slowly, devouring his cigarette. He looks around, sees the crew stifling laughs. As Ron leaves.

RON, THE DIRECTOR (cont'd)  
(under his breath)  
What a pussy.

4 **EXT. STUDIO LOT - MOMENTS LATER**

4

Carroll smokes against the wall of a studio, watching the requisite Roman Centurions and Feather-Bedecked Showgirls.

The door next to him opens, revealing BUZZ PILEGGI (40s, shaken so many hands his fingerprints have worn off), the show's producer.

BUZZ  
Carroll! How are ya? Y'know, I just got off the phone with Mr. Novak, he's been talking to the papers again. We're "stealing his story," you know the usual bullshit... I, uh, really think he'd calm down if you invited him back-

CARROLL  
No way, not after last time.

BUZZ  
He'd been drinking, I hear he's really cleaned up his act.

CARROLL

He punched me in the back of the head!

BUZZ

So he's a little rough around the edges, what do you expect? He was a spy! You're *playing* the guy, for crissakes, you could use a little toughening up.

Buzz leaves Carroll to smoke alone.

5 **EXT. LOS ANGELES - LATER**

5

Dealer plates rattle in sync with an inline-six as Carroll pulls off the studio lot. He cruises the glitz and glamour of HOLLYWOOD, 1952, where we lay our scene.

Workers paint up a billboard for the new film *The Unloved Woman*, starring Sterling Hayden and Rose Carpenter.

The soothing tones of FM radio are interrupted with this news bulletin:

RADIO

Under questioning by the House Un-American Activities Committee, Elia Kazan has named eight of his former comra--

Carroll reaches down, there's a *click*, then--

RADIO (cont'd)

--*wheel of fortune goes spinning around. Will the arrow point my way? Will this be my day?*

*Billboard's* top single is a welcome reprieve. It underscores Carroll's arrival to his new rental in the Hollywood Hills.

6 **EXT. CARROLL'S HOME - DAY**

6

The sun casts an orange glow as Carroll coasts into his long driveway. What a city. *This is the life.*

His reverie is quickly shattered: propping open his front door is the weekly delivery of milk, one dewy glass conspicuously missing from the crate. Someone's here.

7 INT. CARROLL'S HOME/ENTRANCE - MOMENTS LATER

7

Carroll peeks in cautiously, pulling his umbrella from the bucket. He enters, wielding it like a baseball bat.

Inside, he sees the missing glass, empty, sitting on his dinner table. Slowly, he inches closer, his grip squeezing tighter and tighter-

*Wham!* With a flurry of motion, the umbrella springs in his hand, canvas exploding outwards. It launches out of his hands, shattering the empty glass.

CARROLL

Fuck!

He cowers like a turtle in his shell. Then he uncurls and approaches the dinner table: sweeping the shattered glass aside, revealing a small folder.

He opens it, out spill pictures and newspaper clippings: protest pictures, a college-aged theater company on stage.

On top lies an issue of *The Daily Californian*, headlined **Campus Theater Club Labeled Communist Subversives** with a picture of five students, most prominently a young black woman in large corrective lenses, and just behind her:

Young, fresh-faced, **Carroll Whitmire**. *The College Years*. On the inside of the folder, in red pen: "Pick up the phone."

*Rrrrring!*

Carroll jumps in surprise again, then stares at the ringing phone. *Rrrrring!* He grabs it.

VOICE (O.S.)

I need you to retrieve something for me. No cops, no studio goons, or you're looking at tomorrow's front page. Understand?

CARROLL

Who are you? What do you want?

VOICE (O.S.)

There's a man who lives at 78 North Street in Covina. He's got a film reel from August 1950, in his storage shed, labeled "Angel Eyes". Deliver it to the dumpster behind *Orient Express* tomorrow morning.

CARROLL  
 Why me? I don't know how to do  
 anything!

VOICE (O.S.)  
 You play a spy, don't you? You'll  
 figure it out.

The line goes dead. Carroll just about shits himself.

8 **EXT. ANOTHER HOME - LATER**

8

Carroll stands in front of the door, takes a deep breath.  
 And *knocks*.

No response. He *knocks* again. And then again. Now he's  
*knocking* incessantly.

Finally, the door opens, revealing an extremely drunk man in  
 a bath-robe waving a pistol and a whiskey-glass. It's not  
 clear if he knows which is which.

This is the real JACK NOVAK (40s, hints of Steven Seagal  
 post-career).

Carroll jumps at the gun, but tries to give his most winning  
 smile. There's a moment of recognition.

JACK  
 (slurring)  
 You son of a bitch!

Jack pistol-whips Carroll *hard* across the jaw.

**ACT ONE**

9 **EXT. JACK NOVAK'S FRONT PORCH - CONTINUOUS**

9

We pick up from the break, Carroll is nursing his jaw on the  
 ground, Jack stands over him.

JACK  
 (slurring)  
 Every Tuesday you make me a joke.

CARROLL  
 Mister Novak, I-

Jack steps toward him, downing the rest of the glass.

JACK  
I've been calling for months-

Carroll scrambles backwards.

CARROLL  
I'm sorry, I didn't-

JACK  
-and now you come crawling back to my door.

CARROLL  
I need your help-

JACK  
Yeah of course you fucking do. Why do you think I've been calling?

CARROLL  
No no, I need your *help*. I'm in trouble.

Jack spits on him.

JACK  
Why would I ever help you?

CARROLL  
You'll have full access to the set. Every day. You can-  
(this is painful)  
-fix my performance.

Beat.

10 INT. CARROLL'S CAR - LATER

10

Carroll drives, looking over his shoulder constantly. Jack cranks the passenger seat back, downing a hangover cure.

JACK  
So what're you in trouble for? Gambling? This a sex thing?

CARROLL  
(distracted)  
Uh, yeah.

JACK  
Which was it? Gambling or sex?



CARROLL  
Uhh... both?

JACK  
Sounds like a good time. You gotta  
introduce me to your friends.

Carroll pulls up to a house, but there's lots of other cars  
parked out front, some kind of party?

JACK (cont'd)  
Don't park right in front, park  
around the corner.

He parks around the corner.

11 **EXT. OUTSIDE AL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

11

They stand across the street, looking at the house. Carroll  
just starts walking toward the front door. Jack grabs him by  
the shoulder.

JACK  
What the hell are you doing?

CARROLL  
I was just gonna ask--

JACK  
Hey, moron, if you can just ask  
nicely why do you need my help? Okay?  
Spy lesson number one, never go in  
the front door.

12 **EXT. AL'S BACKYARD - LATER**

12

Jack and Carroll clumsily fall from the fence into the  
rather large backyard. They pause for a moment, hoping no  
one heard them. Curious, Carroll crouches over to a window.

Inside, a couple having sex, MUSCLES (Stallone circa Italian  
Stallion) and PRETTYBOY (Van der Beek circa Dawson's Creek).  
Embarrassed, he ducks back down.

PRETTYBOY  
(flatly)  
Oh yeah baby, I need you.

AL HEWITT (50s, jodhpurs and beret) steps in.

AL  
*That's* the delivery you're going  
 with? Come on, look at me. Look. I'm  
 not even at half-mast.

PRETTYBOY  
 Sorry, sir.

Jack pops up next to Carroll, peering in the window.

JACK  
 Sex gambling?

CARROLL  
 Sure.

The sex-havers resume having sex. Carroll has to drag Jack  
 from the window.

They come up to the storage shed, shoddily made out of wood.  
 Carroll pulls at the door, but it's padlocked.

CARROLL (cont'd)  
 Shit.

JACK  
 Step aside.

Jack pulls a bobby pin from his pocket and jams it in the  
 lock. He fiddles with it, pulling at the lock. No dice. He  
 fiddles with it more, shaking the lock, frustrated.

Then he pulls out the gun and just starts wailing on the  
 lock with its butt. *Clang*.

CARROLL  
 You brought the gun?

JACK  
 Why wouldn't I?

CARROLL  
 Don't shoot anybody.

JACK  
 Relax, I'm not gonna shoot anyone.

The house's backdoor opens. Jack spins, pointing the gun at  
 Al, who raises his hands.

JACK (cont'd)  
 I *will* shoot you! We need the key to  
 your shed, where is it?

AL  
It's on my desk, I'll go grab it.

JACK  
Don't move.  
(to Carroll)  
Go get it.

CARROLL  
Me?

JACK  
Yeah, *you*, fuckhead. I've got to keep  
the gun on him.

13 INT. AL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

13

Carroll steps directly into the porn shoot. Prettyboy and  
Muscles chat on the couch, still nude.

MUSCLES  
--so on top of alimony I gotta pay  
child support.

PRETTYBOY  
That's rough.

They notice Carroll. Deer in the headlights.

CARROLL  
Hey fellas. Point me in the direction  
of the desk?

Muscles rushes Carroll. Carroll screams like one of those  
screaming goats.

The nude Muscles slams Carroll into a bookshelf, holding him  
there. Carroll grasps for anything to defend himself with,  
towards a small golden statuette on a shelf above him.

His fingers graze it, as the breath is forced out of his  
body. Almost got it... aallmost got it!

The statuette teeters on the edge, before falling directly  
onto Carroll's head with a loud *THUNK*. Muscles steps back,  
and Carroll wobbles and faceplants. The last thing he sees  
before he loses consciousness, the plate on the statuette.

*AL HEWITT, BEST DIRECTOR, "Passing Through" 1946*

CARROLL (cont'd)  
 (woozy)  
*I love that movie-*

14 EXT. AL'S BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

14

Muscles drags Carroll out by his leg, followed by Prettyboy.

JACK  
 Aw man what the fuck.

CARROLL  
 Sorry...

AL  
 Put the gun down, you're outnumbered.

Carroll looks up at Al, delirious.

CARROLL  
 I'm a big admirer of your work.

AL  
 Put it down or I tell my large friend  
 here to break a leg.

Beat. Muscles grabs Carroll's right leg.

CARROLL  
 No! My acting leg!

On this, Jack starts to lower the gun. Then stops.

JACK  
 Wait. This is stupid. I have a gun.  
 If you break his leg I'll shoot you.

AL  
 You're outnumbered--

Jack points the gun at all three of them in turn.

JACK  
 Bang bang bang. Coulda done it right  
 then. Put him down. Open the door.

Muscles lets go, Carroll woozily stands up. He puts a hand  
 on Al's shoulder.

CARROLL  
 I have headshots in the car if you're  
 interested.

Al kicks a small rock aside, revealing a key in the grass.

15 INT. AL'S STORAGE SHED - MOMENTS LATER

15

The door swings open, revealing Carroll, and Jack, still holding the gun.

Jack ushers Al, Muscles and Prettyboy in first, keeping the gun trained on them. Al clicks the single lightbulb on.

CARROLL

The reel from August 1950. "Angel Eyes".

Al pulls a crate from the wall.

AL

1950 was a busy year. Made a lotta pictures.

JACK

You know, this...  
(gesturing vaguely)  
gay stuff. It's immoral. It's unAmerican.

AL

You're robbing me at gunpoint.

JACK

What's more American than that?

He starts digging through, checking the names written on each reel, then tossing it aside. He pauses, looks up.

AL

You gonna help or what?

Carroll crouches to help look through all of the reels. After a moment, Al unspools a small reel, holding the film up to the light, squinting at it.

AL (cont'd)

Ah, right. That makes sense.

Carroll grabs the reel from Al. It's labeled "Angel Eyes: August 5th, 1950".

CARROLL

Uh, th-thanks.

Seeking to calm his nerves, Carroll makes the ill-fated decision to light up a cigarette. He flicks his lighter.

AL

Wait!

SUDDEN CHAOS! Al lunges, trying to stop Carroll from lighting up. Jack turns the gun on Al, but Muscles takes his chance, grabbing Jack and tossing him out the doorway.

As he falls, Jack pulls the trigger, *BANG!* The lightbulb shatters.

Carroll screeches with fright, dropping the lighter directly into the box labeled "1950".

**FWOOM!** The box ignites, the force of the explosion sending the group flying through the flimsy wooden walls. Carroll still grips the "Angel Eyes" reel.

The whole shack goes up, blowing the sheet metal roof off.

16 EXT. AL'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

16

Carroll holds the reel with both hands, lying directly next to Jack, who rolls in the grass, putting out the flames on his jacket.

CARROLL

I'm sorry- I'm so sorry-

JACK

What the fuck did you do?

Al, Muscles and Prettyboy stand over the pair.

AL

THAT WAS ALL I HAD LEFT!

CARROLL

I'm sorry, I didn't mean--

AL

Big guy, put 'em back in the shed.

Muscles lunges forward, but suddenly the corrugated steel roof whistles down, sticking into the ground between the two parties with a *twanggg*.

JACK

Lesson number two: always run.

17 **EXT. OUTSIDE AL'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER**

17

The mismatched pair launch over the fence, sprinting down the street to Carroll's car. Carroll tosses the reel in the open window; over his shoulder, his pursuers close in.

JACK  
DRIVE!

The car skids out, fishtailing down the road. The sky is darkening to night.

JACK (cont'd)  
Where are you going?

CARROLL  
Home!

JACK  
Don't go home, moron, what if they're following us?

CARROLL  
Okay, then let's go to your place.

Jack smacks him, the car swerves, almost into another car.

JACK  
Watch it!

CARROLL  
I think I have a concussion.

JACK  
Wait, I know a place. Take a right.

18 **EXT. SEEDY PART OF TOWN - LATER**

18

Jack knocks rapidly on the door of a grimy porno theater. Carroll stands by, reel in hand.

JACK  
Open up, I know you're in there you fuckin' creep.

The door opens to reveal STINKY JOE, the proprietor. He recognizes Jack.

STINKY JOE  
What do you want?

JACK  
Rent a theater, private showing.

STINKY JOE  
For two guys you gotta pay twice the usual, Jack.

CARROLL  
The usual?

Jack looks embarrassed, hands over a wad of cash.

STINKY JOE  
And I get to watch.

19 INT. PORNO THEATER - LATER

19

Carroll and Jack sit in the middle of the small theater. Stinky Joe starts the projector then rushes down to sit next to them. On screen, a beautiful woman, lounging on the bed.

STINKY JOE  
Angel Eyes. Haven't seen one of hers in a while.

Then a slightly overweight middle-aged man enters the frame, his face unclear. He mounts, coitus ensues.

STINKY JOE (cont'd)  
Hey, do you guys mind if I...?

JACK  
Not at all.

CARROLL  
Please don't.

But before a decision is made, the action changes. Angel Eyes is riding on top of him, but he starts to convulse, and not in pleasure.

Angel Eyes gets off (not that way), and stands back as the man grabs his chest. Finally, his convulsions stop, and his head turns toward the camera, slack-jawed and still. Dead.

JACK  
Huh.

STINKY JOE  
Wait, I know that guy.

CARROLL  
He a favorite?



STINKY JOE

No, I mean I really know him. He used to come in here all the time for Angel Eyes films.

CARROLL

Who was he? Did he have a name?

STINKY JOE

Yeah, he went by Harry.

JACK

There's a lot of Harry's, how about a last name?

STINKY JOE

Johnson.

CARROLL

Harry Johnson.

*Beat. Right.* Stinky Joe shrugs.

JACK

Who's the girl?

STINKY JOE

Angel Eyes? She made a few films a couple years back. Like I said Mr. Johnson was a big fan. She stopped about two years ago.

CARROLL

Why'd she stop so suddenly?

STINKY JOE

It happens all the time. People get tired of having to perform, they have kids. They move on.

CARROLL

Do you know where she ended up?

STINKY JOE

Buddy, these people don't want to get tracked down. Makes things difficult.

The reel ends, to black.

20 INT. PORNO THEATER/LOBBY - LATER

20

Jack and Carroll stand in the greasy lobby. Jack lights up a cigarette, Carroll pulls one from his pocket and pats himself down for his lighter, before remembering. *Shit.*

Cigarette hanging from his mouth, he looks at Jack expectantly. Jack returns only a blank stare.

CARROLL

So we make the drop in the morning  
and it's done, the nightmare is over.

JACK

You think these guys'll leave you  
alone?

CARROLL

But I did what they wanted!

JACK

"They" who is "they"? Do you have any  
clue what you're actually mixed up  
in? Because I don't buy sex gambling.

CARROLL

I don't know! I don't know who's  
doing this, I don't know why. I just  
want to go back to my life.

Jack scoffs. Carroll looks pretty pathetic.

JACK

Listen, take it from a real spy: if I  
had something got you spooked enough  
to commit arson--

CARROLL

It was an accident!

JACK

--to commit *accidental* arson, I  
wouldn't let it go. I'd keep  
squeezing until I got every drop.

The unlit cigarette trembles in Carroll's mouth. Jack's clearly enjoying this.

JACK (cont'd)

But that's just me.

CARROLL

What-- what should I do?

JACK  
 If we're dropping this thing in a  
 dumpster, somebody's gotta pick it  
 up, right? It's time for an old-  
 fashioned "stake-out."

**ACT TWO**

**21 EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT/ALLEYWAY - THE NEXT MORNING**

**21**

Carroll pops out of his car and enters the alley behind *Orient Express*. The dumpster buzzes with flies and stinks to high heaven.

Carroll plugs his nose and tosses the reel into the dumpster, it pops a trash bag, squirting an indistinct liquid onto his jacket.

CARROLL  
 Gross.

As he exits the alley, he sees Jack nursing a whiskey through the window of a bar across the way: clear view of the dumpster.

Carroll looks over his shoulder, keenly aware he could be watched this very instant, and drives on, looping around a corner.

**22 INT. BAR - LATER**

**22**

Jack drinks at the end of the bar, near a window facing out onto the street. He watches the film reel sitting atop the dumpster. Nothing happens.

Carroll enters through the bar's backdoor, out of breath.

JACK  
 Where'd you park?

CARROLL  
 Ten streets down, like you said.

JACK  
 Good. Five is standard, but you  
 needed the exercise.

Carroll sits down with a huff. Beat.

JACK (cont'd)  
So uh, did I ever tell you about the  
time I stopped a political  
assassination by seducing the Mayor  
of Pittsburgh's wayward daughter?

Carroll rolls his eyes.

CARROLL  
We aired that episode two weeks ago.

JACK  
Right, that's right... But you  
weren't believable, no way you coulda  
seduced a dame like her. You were  
missing something pretty important.

CARROLL  
What's that?

JACK  
My gargantuan dick.

CARROLL  
Right, I'll see if we can work that  
in next episode.

JACK  
Thanks.

Carroll signals the bartender.

CARROLL  
Something hard.

JACK  
You know what else was hard--?

CARROLL  
And make it a double.

Hours pass. Glasses pile up. Still nothing. Jack yammers on, Carroll gets good-old-fashioned day drunk, Jack is not far behind.

JACK  
-which is, of course, when I called  
an emergency meeting with the Mayor--

CARROLL  
(slurring)  
Did you even do any of it?

JACK

What?

CARROLL

Is *any* of it true?

JACK

Of course it is.

CARROLL

You stopped thirty riots, busted ten drug rings and ferreted out fifteen moles without anyone figuring out you were a spy?

JACK

You saying I'm a fraud? After all I've done for you--

CARROLL

Done for me? I'm in deeper shit than I started--

JACK

And whose fault is that?

CARROLL

Mine! But you were supposed to teach me! You taught me alright, how to fuck up!

Jack punches Carroll weakly. They start to fight.

The underpaid bartender reaches over and grabs them by the collar, pulling them apart.

Over Jack's shoulder, Carroll looks out the window to the dumpster. The reel is gone. At the far end of the alley, a figure disappears around the corner.

CARROLL (cont'd)

Shit.

23 **EXT. CHINESE RESTAURANT/ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

23

Carroll bursts out the door, into the street. Jack follows close behind. Halfway across the street, Jack tackles him to the ground.

CARROLL

Wait--

A car screeches to a stop and lays on the horn. Carroll tries to get up, but Jack yanks him back down.

DRIVER (O.S.)

Get a room!

CARROLL

The reel--!

JACK

Take it back!

CARROLL

They're getting away!

JACK

And that'll be real sad for you,  
won't it?

Carroll crawls across the street. The car swerves around them, barely catching Carroll's out-stretched fingers under its tire. He yelps in pain.

JACK (cont'd)

Take it back, and we go find who it  
is, right?

Carroll whimpers.

JACK (cont'd)

Say I'm a good spy, or you'll never  
know who's after you.

CARROLL

You're a good spy.

JACK

And I did everything in the TV show.

CARROLL

You're a good spy and you did  
everything in the TV show.

JACK

And I've got a gargantuan dick.

CARROLL

(sighs)  
--and you've got a gargantuan dick.

JACK

Good. Thank you. I agree. Let's go.

24 EXT. STREET - MOMENTS LATER

24

Carroll rockets out the far end of the alley, Jack grabs his arm and yanks him back in. They peer around the corner.

Carrying a the metal reel under one arm, a YOUNG BLACK WOMAN with natural hair starts to check over her shoulder. Jack yanks Carroll back again. After a few moments, they exit the alley, trying to look nonchalant.

JACK  
Recognize anyone?

CARROLL  
I didn't get a good look.

Ahead of them, the woman pauses at a car parked along the road. She leans down to the window, then continues down the sidewalk.

As Jack passes the car, the doors open and two black men step out, one in SUNGLASSES, the other in a TURTLENECK.

SUNGLASSES  
Hey, creeps!

Carroll wheels around, then completes a full 360 with the help of Turtleneck's fist, falling to the ground. Jack drops into an incorrect fighting stance.

TURTLENECK  
Why are you harassing a nice lady like that?

CARROLL  
No! We weren't--

Sunglasses kicks Carroll in the stomach. Jack swings wildly, but Sunglasses leans out of the way.

TURTLENECK  
Then why were you following her? Huh?

JACK  
Don't say anyth--

CARROLL  
The film reel! We wanted to know who took it!

Beat. Jack looks at Carroll incredulously. On that distraction Turtleneck pops him in the nose.

JACK

Fuck!

Jack reels back. The two men check the street. Empty. Sunglasses pops the trunk.

CARROLL

Wait, what are you--?

Jack and Carroll are hoisted bodily into the trunk like luggage. It slams shut, pitch black. *Beat.*

JACK

So. We're making progress.

CARROLL

I hate you.

25 INT. CAR TRUNK - LATER

25

The car comes to a stop.

JACK

Okay, when they open the trunk we have to strike, change the balance of power. Otherwise, we're dead.

CARROLL

What do I do?

JACK

Just punch the first person you see.

The trunk pops, flooding the interior with light. Outside: the woman we saw carrying the reel earlier. She's in her late 20s, natural hair and big, distinctive glasses.

*Beat.*

YOUNG WOMAN

*Carroll?*

CARROLL

*Frankie?*

Carroll flashes back to *The Daily Californian* article. Right in front of Carroll in the picture, this same woman.

Jack lunges forward, but Frankie brings the trunk down on his head. It bounces back up cartoonishly. He slumps halfway out of the trunk.



FRANKIE

What the fuck are you doing here?

CARROLL

You brought me here! You blackmailed me! You took the film reel! You tossed me in the trunk! I've been yanked around for twelve straight hours and I'm getting pretty fucking tired of it! Will someone *please* tell me what is going on?

FRANKIE

Carroll, if I could tell you I would. Last night I got a phone call that told me to check that dumpster. That wasn't you?

CARROLL

No it wasn't me! I didn't even know you were in Los Angeles!

FRANKIE

Then somebody's yanking both our chains. Listen, I'm not exactly someone you want to reconnect with if you want your life to go back to normal. Just walk away from this, it'll make things simpler for both of us.

(beat)

Who's this guy?

JACK

(weakly)

I walk alone... I'm the *FBI's Communist...*

CARROLL

Nobody.

26 **EXT. NOWHERE ROAD - DAY**

26

Frankie helps Carroll out of the trunk. He then slides Jack the rest of the way out, slumping onto the ground.

FRANKIE

There's a gas station half a mile that way. You can call a cab.

She gets into the car, driven by Sunglasses, who nods at Carroll.

FRANKIE (cont'd)  
Hey. It was nice to see you.

The car speeds down the road, leaving Jack and Carroll in the dust. Carroll stares after the car, then down at Jack. He looks the opposite direction, sees the gas station in the distance.

Then he just lies down on the dusty ground next to Jack.

### ACT THREE

#### 27 INT. JACK'S HOUSE - LATER

27

Carroll opens the front door, supporting Jack who stumbles in woozily. He sits Jack down at the table and grabs a bag of frozen peas from the fridge, giving it to Jack to hold to his head.

JACK  
So, what exactly happened back there?  
Last think I remember was getting  
thrown into the trunk.

CARROLL  
Nothing. They just dumped us out.

JACK  
So who was that dame? Did you find  
out anything?

CARROLL  
No. I think we should stop looking  
into this. Maybe they *will* leave me  
alone.

Jack leans his head back.

JACK  
Alright, whatever you say Boss. I'll  
see you on set tomorrow.

Carroll winces at that, but doesn't object. Suddenly a loud *thump* at the door. Shit. Carroll and Jack share a look. Could they have been followed this whole time?

Carroll slowly approaches the door, grabbing a bottle of whiskey to use as a club. He swings the door open, holding the bottle high!!!

To find no one.

*Ding Ding!* He leans out, sees the paperboy riding down the street, tossing papers. He looks down, the *LA Times* lies on the front stoop.

On the back, there's a full-page ad for the biggest blockbuster of the season, *The Unloved Woman*. A historical romance starring *Sterling Hayden* and newcomer ingenue, *Rose Carpenter*.

Wait.

He looks closer at the image of *Rose Carpenter*. Her eyes. Her *Angel Eyes*. A flash of the porno reel.

CARROLL  
Gotta be fucking kidding me.

28 INT. JACK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

28

Carroll is on the phone, the other side picks up.

CARROLL  
Buzz, it's me, Carroll. You know that new romance coming out, *The Unloved Woman*?

BUZZ  
Yeah, the Hayden flick.

CARROLL  
Know anything about *Rose Carpenter*?

BUZZ  
She's new, started showing up in minor roles a couple years back. This is her first big break.

CARROLL  
I'd like to meet her.

BUZZ  
You got a crush or something?

CARROLL  
Could you just get in touch for me?

BUZZ  
As long as you do me a favor. Call Jack, alright? It'd really help out.

Carroll looks at Jack, still sitting at the table.

CARROLL  
Yeah. I think I can do that.

29 EXT. STUDIO LOT - THE NEXT MORNING

29

Carroll arrives at the studio. Jack's already there, arguing with a security guard.

SECURITY GUARD  
I do know who you are, that's why I'm not letting you in. Mister Whitmire gave me very clear instructions after last time.

JACK  
You dolt, the situation has changed.

SECURITY GUARD  
I'm sorry Mister Novak, but I'm going to have to turn you away. Like the last five times.  
(seeing Carroll)  
I was just getting rid of him, Mister Whitmire.

Carroll finds satisfaction at Jack's distress, but nods.

CARROLL  
Let him through. He'll be advising on-set today.

The guard gives Carroll an "are you sure about this?" look, but steps out of the way.

30 INT. STUDIO - MOMENTS LATER

30

As the pair enter, they're immediately accosted by Buzz Pileggi.

BUZZ  
Carroll! Jack! So good to see you two playing nice.

Carroll smiles halfheartedly. Jack smiles wholeheartedly.

BUZZ (cont'd)  
I've got some wonderful news about that call last night--

But right as he says it, they turn a corner to see the wonderful news:

*ROSE CARPENTER (28, eyes you could drown in)* stands on-set, flipping through pages of a script. She looks up, her eyes catch Carroll's, who stands there a bit dumbstruck.

**ACT FOUR**

31 **INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS**

31

We pick up, Carroll looking dumbstruck.

ROSE

Mister Whitmire! When I heard there was an opening, I jumped at the chance to work with you!

CARROLL

That's wonderful!  
(aside to Buzz)  
There was an opening?

BUZZ

I made one.

JACK

I'm Jack Novak. The real Jack Novak. Your performances really leave an impression.

ROSE

(flattered)  
What a compliment! Which have you seen?

Jack fumbles a bit.

JACK

Well. You know. So many of them. Can't pick just one.

Carroll glares at him.

BUZZ

Rose here'll be stepping in for the role of Judith Moss, the schoolteacher.

JACK

Judith Moss, I remember her. You're much too pretty for the role.

ROSE

You're quite the flirt.

CARROLL  
Yeah, he's a real pleasure.

32 INT. SCHOOLHOUSE/CLASSROOM - DAY

32

**Black and White, 4:3**

Rose is buttoned up as Judith Moss, hair pulled back in a schoolmarm's bun. The last of the children exit the room, and she gets to wiping the chalk off the board.

Carroll ambles in, in character as Jack Novak. He watches for a few moments from the doorway, before flicking a lighter.

Rose turns, startled.

ROSE  
Oh! I didn't hear you enter. Which one is yours?

Carroll puffs his cigarette, revealing a ring-less finger.

CARROLL  
You're Judith Moss?  
(beat)  
Heard you take an unconventional approach to the Mayflower story. Doesn't make the parents too happy.

ROSE  
You're from the Board. Telling my students what really happened is--

CARROLL  
You're not in trouble. I think you're pretty brave teaching the truth like that. Why don't you give me a lesson over dinner tonight?

Rose looks flustered, but then--

JACK (O.S.)  
Cut! Can I say cut? It's like you're reading the dictionary, Carroll. The script doesn't matter. Improvise! Get some sparks flying! I'll show you--

33 INT. SCHOOLHOUSE/CLASSROOM - DAY

33

Rose, blouse down a few buttons, drapes against the chalkboard. Now JACK (real Jack) walks in, mugging for the camera.

JACK  
Heya toots. Let's say we skip dinner  
and get right to it.

Rose sweeps the pencils and apples off her desk, sending them crashing to the floor.

ROSE  
I thought you'd never ask.

34 INT. STUDIO - CONTINUOUS

34

**Color, Widescreen**

Carroll, Buzz and Ron (The Director) stand agape.

JACK  
See, I just let it flow like piss  
outta dog. *That's* a believable  
performance.

Buzz and Ron whisper to each other for a moment.

RON, THE DIRECTOR  
Uh... Let's come back to this one.

35 INT. STUDIO/MAKEUP ROOM - LATER

35

Make-up artists touch up Carroll and Rose, fluttering about. Carroll stares at Rose, unsure how to broach the topic.

ROSE  
You want to ask me something? You  
look like you want to ask me  
something.

CARROLL  
Where'd you come from?

ROSE  
Well, I was born in Utah, if you can  
believe that. A little town called  
Angel's Rest.

CARROLL

No, I mean-- in the business. You're starring opposite Sterling Hayden, that doesn't happen overnight.

Rose seems a little more hesitant.

ROSE

Well, I did whatever came my way for a while. I was in *The Day the Earth Stood Still*. I held flowers.

Carroll reaches up to adjust his hair, the make-up artist slaps his hand away.

CARROLL

Before that, I mean.

ROSE

I don't know what you're getting at.

Carroll wrestles over it for a bit. He turns to look at Rose, the make-up artist grabs his head and turns it forward. Carroll resists, looking back over. The artist stands back unhappily for a moment.

CARROLL

Are you a fan of Al Hewitt's work? I loved *Passing Through*.

BOOM! There it is, recognition. Rose's eyes turn steely.

ROSE

Haven't seen it.

CARROLL

It won a bunch of awards, *Best Director*--

Rose stands up from her chair, leaving the room. Her make-up artists follows her in perfect sync, continuing her work as she moves. Carroll's head is again forced to look directly ahead. This time he doesn't resist.

36 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

36

**Black and White, 4:3**

Carroll sits at a table in the mostly empty restaurant. Rose enters in her new costume, a modest dress that she wears the hell out of. Carroll's cigarette drops out of his mouth. He stands, kicking out her chair with his foot.



JACK (O.S.)  
 (stage-whispering)  
 Remember, improvise!

Carroll gives him a derisive glance, but goes with it.

CARROLL  
 Sorry if I was too forward earlier.

ROSE  
 I don't get people asking about my  
 work often.

She sits down.

CARROLL  
 It's a complicated profession.

Beat.

ROSE  
 Teaching?

CARROLL  
 (no)  
 If you want to tell the truth, not  
 the sanitized version of the past.

ROSE  
 Some people think the past is best  
 left forgotten. Dredging it up causes  
 nothing but trouble.

CARROLL  
 I think the past's got a way of  
 finding you when you least expect it.  
 Even the parts we don't want to  
 remember. Especially those parts.

ROSE  
 We still talking about the Mayflower?

CARROLL  
 Listen, Judith, I came to you for a  
 reason. And it's not just that you  
 knock me out in that dress.

He looks over his shoulder. The waiter, is leaning on a  
 table, smoking, indifferent. Carroll leans in close.

CARROLL (cont'd)  
 It might be risky, but I need some  
 information from you. I'm in trouble.

ROSE  
Why should I trust you?

CARROLL  
I'll put my cards on the table. I'm a  
Communist.

ROSE  
So what?

Carroll looks her dead in the eyes. Serious.

CARROLL  
You can ruin me with that. So we're  
both at risk.

Beat.

ROSE  
(quietly)  
*Oh.*

CARROLL  
So do you think you can help me out?

ROSE  
Fine. What do you need to know?

JACK (O.S.)  
CUT!

He walks into frame, putting his arm around Carroll's  
shoulder.

JACK  
For the first time in my life, I  
believed every word you said.

37 **EXT. STUDIO/PARKING LOT - LATER**

37

Carroll slots his key into the car door.

ROSE  
Is it true?

She's standing behind him.

ROSE (cont'd)  
What you said in there.

CARROLL  
Berkeley, 1942. A theater troupe.  
Things got... political.

ROSE  
Why tell me?

CARROLL  
Angel Eyes?

She doesn't say no.

38 INT. ROSE'S VILLA - LATER

38

Rose and Carroll talk over cocktails.

ROSE  
You burned it down? Really?

CARROLL  
I- I didn't mean to.

She stuffs some pretzels in her face.

ROSE  
That might be the best thing you ever  
did. You know how many people don't  
have a cloud hanging over their head  
anymore?

CARROLL  
What do you mean?

ROSE  
I kept up with some of my co-stars  
after I got out. Good old "Al" had a  
habit of ringing them up every time  
they ran into money. Threatening to  
give their films a new theatrical  
run, one with more accurate billing.

CARROLL  
He ever give you a call? This movie,  
*The Unloved Woman*, that's pretty big.

ROSE  
No. No, he hasn't.

There's something more to that.

CARROLL

I saw... one of your films. Your last one, I think. That's what I stole. Your co-star, he-

ROSE

Died of a heart attack. It's not a memory I like to relive.

CARROLL

Do you know why anyone would want that?

ROSE

Perverts.

CARROLL

Other than that. Who... who was he?

ROSE

He was some sort of cop. I think he was putting pressure on Hewitt, got him to arrange a scene with me. After he... a bunch of uniforms showed up, took him away. Told us to stay quiet. Al never called me up again. I lost my taste for the business.

There's a pause. Carroll's not sure what to say.

CARROLL

You were really good, you know.  
(beat, embarrassed)  
I mean today.

Rose laughs at his embarrassment, takes a swig.

ROSE

I was good back then, too.

39 **EXT. ROSE'S VILLA - MOMENTS LATER**

39

Rose lets him out the front door, suddenly *FLASH! FLASH FLASH FLASH!*

A PAPAZZO (40s, schlubby) high-tails it down the street, camera in-hand.

CARROLL

Shit.

40 EXT. CARROLL'S HOME - THE NEXT MORNING

40

Jack hammers on Carroll's front door. It opens, revealing a half-dressed Carroll, toothbrush in his mouth.

Jack holds up a copy of the *Hollywoodland Dispatch*. On the front page: "*COMMUNIST COSTARS CONJUGAL CALL?*"

JACK

What the fuck is this?

Carroll grabs the paper and looks at it, the unflattering picture of him shielding his eyes from the flash, Rose in the doorway behind him.

JACK (cont'd)

I thought you were pumping her for information.

CARROLL

I was!

JACK

Oh, you were pumping her alright.

41 INT. CARROLL'S HOME - CONTINUOUS

41

Carroll wanders back to the bathroom.

CARROLL

Nothing happened-  
(resumes brushing)  
-and it's not like you weren't all over her on-set.

(he spits in the sink)  
Jealousy doesn't look good on you.

JACK

Did you get anything more than a good time out of your late-night excursion?

Carroll notices that he rather stupidly has left the blackmail folder on his kitchen counter. *Crap.*

CARROLL

I did, in fact. The man in the reel, our "Harry Johnson," was a cop.

Jack heads over to the kitchen, opening drawers, looking for booze. Carroll jumps in front of him.

CARROLL (cont'd)

Allow me.

JACK

Cop dies shooting a porno, you think we'd'a heard about it.

Carroll quickly shuffles the blackmail folder off the counter into a nearby trashcan, then pours Jack a drink.

CARROLL

Something tells me they didn't want that one in the papers.

JACK

We should be able to find some record of him. Officer that died of a heart attack on August 5th, 1950.

CARROLL

Died in the line of duty.  
(checks his watch)  
Shit, I gotta-

JACK

I'll handle this one. I'm a bit of a hero to enforcers of truth and justice everywhere. Cops don't like actors so much.

**42 INT. POLICE STATION - LATER**

**42**

OFFICER BRADLEY (30, piggish) stands behind his desk at reception.

OFFICER BRADLEY

Get your shit-ass face out of my fucking police station.

Jack's shit-ass face gets thrown out of the police station.

**43 EXT. POLICE STATION - CONTINUOUS**

**43**

Jack skitters back across the pavement. Officer Bradley follows.

JACK

Hey, hey, hold on a second-

Bradley kicks at his gut. Jack flinches.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
Do you even remember me?

Jack stands up, holding his hands defensively.

JACK  
Of course I do,  
(he doesn't)  
Officer--

He glances down at the officer's badge.

JACK (cont'd)  
(oh *shit*)  
Bradley.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
Good, 'cause I remember you, *Mister Novak*.

JACK  
Listen--

OFFICER BRADLEY  
My *wife*? Buttered her up with all those stories. She's such a fan of the show, how could she resist the real *Agent Jack Novak*?

He delivers a solid kick to the shin. Jack buckles.

JACK  
She never said she was married--

OFFICER BRADLEY  
That's what the *ring* is for!

JACK  
Okay okay okay wait-- wait!

Bradley hesitates.

JACK (cont'd)  
I'll make it up to you.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
You'll un-fondle my wife?

JACK  
She can meet Whitmire. He's-- he's different, he's not like me-- he's decent. He won't make a pass at her.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
And why would I agree to that?

JACK  
Because a beautiful woman like that  
deserves a night out. When's the last  
time you took her somewhere that  
didn't have a bowl of pretzels on the  
table?

*A long time ago.*

JACK (cont'd)  
Dinner, tonight, the four of us.  
We'll smooth it all over. I'm buying.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
What do you want?

**44 INT. POLICE STATION - LATER**

**44**

Jack slaps a folder on a metal table, labeled "Deaths in the  
Line of Duty, 1950". He flips through the papers, looking  
for August.

*There!* We scan across: "DATE: August 5th, 1950. NAME: Harold  
F. Johnson."

JACK  
Huh.

"CAUSE OF DEATH:---" But we cut to Jack's face before we see  
it!

JACK (cont'd)  
Sonnova bitch.

**45 EXT. STUDIO - THAT EVENING**

**45**

Jack smokes against his car, waiting for Carroll. Carroll  
exits, chatting animatedly with Rose. He sees Jack, and  
breaks off.

JACK  
Didn't mean to interrupt your  
courtship.

Carroll gives him a sharp look.



JACK (cont'd)  
I pulled some strings at the precinct, looks like our Harry Johnson didn't die of a heart attack.

CARROLL  
We saw it happen.

JACK  
That's not what the official records say. As far as the LAPD is concerned, Harold F. Johnson was the victim of a gangland murder.

CARROLL  
...what? That doesn't make any sense.

JACK  
Who am I to contest the fine police-work of our boys in blue.

CARROLL  
Did they arrest anyone?

JACK  
It didn't say.

CARROLL  
Well. Where does that leave us?

JACK  
With a dinner-date with a police officer and his wife. Who I may have felt up at a bar while he was in the restroom.

(off Carroll's look)  
What? Like you're some saint, Mister Sex-Gambling.

CARROLL  
I uh-- made other dinner plans tonight.

JACK  
(realization)  
You horndog. Well, if you don't want an angry polack putting the screws on me you better show up. I wouldn't want to say anything that might reflect badly on you.

Carroll looks dejected.

JACK (cont'd)  
 Hell, bring her along. I'm a natural  
 fifth wheel.

46 INT. CARROLL'S CAR - THAT NIGHT

46

Carroll and Rose sit in the car, dressed for a nice dinner.  
 Carroll stares straight ahead, obviously nervous.

CARROLL  
 You don't have to come.

ROSE  
 And miss watching you sweat?

Jack knocks on the window, points at his watch.

47 INT. NICE RESTAURANT TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

47

Officer Bradley stands as they enter, shoots a look at Jack,  
 but smiles at Carroll, offering his hand. Carroll takes it.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
 Wow, you look just like on the TV.

CARROLL  
 You must be Officer Bradley.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
 Milton, please. And this is my wife,  
 Clara.

CARROLL  
 Lovely to meet you.

CLARA  
 Beat still my heart, is Carroll  
 Whitmire no longer the most eligible  
 bachelor?

ROSE  
 If you ask the tabloids, we've  
 eloped. Rose, we're filming an  
 episode together, Carroll thought I  
 might enjoy the company.

CLARA  
 Two movie stars at one dinner? You  
 really ought to take me out more  
 often, Milton.

Milton laughs awkwardly.

JACK  
I just wanted to make up for the uh,  
misunderstanding last week.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
I can't wait to hear this.

JACK  
You see I was reaching around-- I  
mean reaching for a glass of water  
when someone bumped into me. I know  
it must have looked bad but--

It's clear no one is buying it.

JACK (cont'd)  
(losing steam)  
That's-uh- what happened. Who's  
hungry?

CUT TO:

48 INT. NICE RESTAURANT TABLE - A FEW DRINKS IN

48

The table is getting along, at varying levels of  
inebriation.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
So tell me about this "investigation"  
you're working on, Jack.

Jack and Carroll give each other a quick look.

JACK  
Oh, it's nothing, just checking up on  
some old news. Didn't find anything  
new.

ROSE  
Ooh, an investigation? Mattie, you  
can't leave us hanging.

JACK  
If you insist.

Jack straightens his tie, relishing the attention. Rose  
raises her eyebrow at Carroll, who rolls his eyes.

JACK (cont'd)  
 An officer named Harold F. Johnson.  
 The files said he was killed, but it  
 doesn't say who by.

OFFICER BRADLEY  
 Harry Johnson? That's a rough one.

They lean in.

OFFICER BRADLEY (cont'd)  
 They found him under an overpass  
 about two years ago, three bullets in  
 him. One straight through the heart.

Jack, Carroll and Rose share a look.

CARROLL  
 Oh. That's awful.

ROSE  
 Horrific.

JACK  
 Who would do such a thing?

OFFICER BRADLEY  
 It was one of those negro gangs. He'd  
 been keeping them in check, they  
 didn't like that. Somebody's gotta  
 stop 'em from killing each other,  
 right?

Beat.

CARROLL  
 Right.

49 **INT. CARROLL'S CAR - NIGHT**

49

Carroll pulls up outside Rose's home.

ROSE  
 Well I don't remember shooting him  
 three times. Or being in a gang. Or  
 being black. Who knows what else I'll  
 learn about myself?  
 (deciding)  
 Night-cap?

Carroll looks a bit uncomfortable.

CARROLL  
Trying to drink less. Feel like I've  
had a vision of my future.

ROSE  
Tea then?

Beat.

CARROLL  
Listen, I don't think now is a good  
time-- I don't want to get you in  
trouble.

ROSE  
Oh, I don't think whether or not I  
get in trouble is up to you.  
(beat)  
Look, if the press is going to be  
sniffing around anyway, why not give  
them the story they want? It'll keep  
'em from digging into everything  
else.

It's hard not to see the logic. And she is very charming.  
And smart. And pretty.

50 INT. ROSE'S VILLA - NIGHT

50

Rose pours herself a bourbon, and sets a pot to boil.

ROSE  
You know, I never met a Communist  
before. What's it like being an enemy  
of the state?

CARROLL  
I'm not a Communist. Not anymore.

ROSE  
What happened?

Carroll takes a beat.

CARROLL  
I grew up.

ROSE  
Ah. Now you see the benefits of  
capitalism.

CARROLL  
 What was I supposed to do? I couldn't  
 live a life on the fringe of society.  
 I had to give it up.

ROSE  
 Are you ashamed of who you were?

CARROLL  
 Are you?

ROSE  
 No.

Beat.

CARROLL  
 Me neither.

Rose raises her glass.

ROSE  
 To who we left behind!

Carroll clinks an imaginary glass against hers. She finishes off their drinks, then a moment between them, their eyes lock, waiting for the next move. Interrupted by the whistle of the boiling kettle.

CARROLL  
 (awkward)  
 I'll get it--

*CRASH!* Glass shatters as a rock flies through the front window, beaming him directly in the forehead with a *thwack!*

He stumbles back, his hands grasping for something to steady. He yelps as his hand finds the hot kettle.

The door bursts open, revealing Muscles and Prettyboy.

PRETTYBOY  
 You gotta admit, that was a pretty good shot.

MUSCLES  
 You know, I always considered the *Hollywoodland Dispatch* a real rag. But it has its uses.

Carroll now lies on the floor, another welt on his head, cradling his scorched hand. Pathetic. He looks up at Rose.

CARROLL  
 (weakly)  
 Help.

Rose looks from Carroll to the intruders. She sighs.

ROSE  
 So maybe this was a bad idea.

**ACT FIVE**

**51 INT./EXT. ROSE'S VILLA - CONTINUOUS**

**51**

Rose yanks Carroll from the floor, supporting him on her shoulders. Muscles charges across the living room towards the duo, each thundering step bringing him closer-

Rose grabs an oven mitt from a hook and then-- the tea kettle whistles through the air towards Muscles, smacking directly into his face. It burns.

MUSCLES  
 AGH!

He stumbles off-track with the force of the blow, holding his face, and smashes into the cabinets. A cornucopia of canned condiments crash onto his head.

Suddenly, a bowl shatters against the back wall. Prettyboy is keeping his distance, tossing whatever he can get his hands on. A potted succulent *explodes* above their heads.

Rose glances over: Muscles is recovering, and he's mad. They're trapped between *The Rock* and a hard place. Rose launches forward, ducking another lobbed plant.

ROSE  
 Duck!

CARROLL  
 Fuck!

It catches Carroll, who ducks just a second too late, spraying him with soil and dead flower petals. *Ptooeey*. He spits them out of his mouth.

The pair cross the living room towards Prettyboy. Carroll grabs a throw pillow with his free hand and covers his sensitive, battered, now dirty face.

Undeterred, Rose swings Carroll bodily forward.

CARROLL (cont'd)

Woah!

The pillow cushions Carroll's head as it slams directly into Prettyboy, knocking him sprawling out the front door and onto the porch.

Carroll stumbles, dropping the pillow, but gets yanked along in Rose's wake and just barely manages to keep his footing.

52 EXT. THE SUBURBS - CONTINUOUS

52

Carroll looks over to his car: it's been blocked off by the thugs'.

ROSE

We'll take mine!

Their pursuers aren't far behind. Muscles pulls Prettyboy up off the floor as Rose unlocks her door and shoves Carroll in the back seat.

The car springs to life, engine revving and headlights glaring, she squeals out down the street. Carroll turns in his seat to look out the back window.

CARROLL

They're coming.

Prettyboy backs out of Rose's driveway, Muscles holds onto the running board. They're in hot pursuit.

ROSE

I know.

Rose scrapes around a corner, yanking hard left into the Hollywood Hills. An unsecured Carroll slides along the plush leather seats, thumping into the door.

CARROLL

Ow!

Prettyboy screeches around the corner just behind, Muscles hangs on for dear life.

CARROLL (cont'd)

Where are we going?

ROSE

I don't know.



They climb the twisted hills, headlights swinging wildly at every turn, cascading light in arcs. The headlights behind inch closer and closer.

CARROLL  
They're getting closer!

ROSE  
Hadn't noticed!

The cars reach a straightaway, their pursuers pull up alongside.

The two hunks of metal hurtle at top speed down the road. Muscles stands on the running board, with one hand he holds onto his car, with the other he reaches towards theirs.

CARROLL  
Are you crazy?

MUSCLES  
(shouting)  
Pull over!

CARROLL  
You're gonna fucking die! Don't jump!

MUSCLES  
Either I jump or you pull over!

Rose glances over, sees he's not bullshitting.

ROSE  
Okay! You can have him!

CARROLL  
What?! No!

ROSE  
I am *not* cleaning him off my wheels!

Muscles tenses, ready to leap.

MUSCLES  
I'm coming over!

Carroll ruffles in his jacket, grabbing his wallet.

CARROLL  
I'll pay you not to jump.

Muscles pauses. He hasn't been paid in a while.

MUSCLES  
I haven't been paid in a while.

CARROLL  
How much do you want?

*Beat.* Dark trees blur by on both sides of the road.

MUSCLES  
Give me your wallet.

CARROLL  
Oh, come on.

MUSCLES  
I swear to God I'll jump. Give me  
your wallet.

Carroll hesitates.

ROSE  
Give him your fucking wallet!

CARROLL  
Okay! Okay. I'll do it.

Carroll tosses his wallet to Muscles. He leans out to catch it with one hand... He got it! He smiles.

*Oh, crap.*

His other hand slips, he pitches forward, faceplanting through Carroll's open window.

CARROLL (cont'd)  
SHIT!

Muscles is suspended briefly between two cars, feet on the running board of one, head through the window of another.

MUSCLES  
(muffled)  
SHIT!

Prettyboy looks over, sees the situation.

PRETTYBOY  
SHIT!

The car swerves, Muscles' feet slip from the running board, catching on the the asphalt.

*CRACK!*

The momentum yanks his body hard, his head catches on the window frame before getting pulled free. He spirals out of control, thumping down a wooded hill and out of sight.

ROSE  
SHIT!

Rose veers to the right, down a side road, Prettyboy continues on the main road. The headlights finally diverge.

**53 INT. MOTEL/ROOM - LATER**

**53**

Rose and Carroll wordlessly unlock the door to a shitty motel room. They trudge in, Rose flops on the bed. Carroll sits in the at-one-point plush chair.

CARROLL  
Do you think he-

ROSE  
Yeah.

CARROLL  
Thanks. For getting me out of there.

ROSE  
Don't mention it.

**54 EXT./INT. STUDIO - THE NEXT MORNING**

**54**

Carroll arrives by taxi, looking like absolute shit. He didn't get any sleep, he's got a two huge welts on his forehead, and a scalded hand.

RON, THE DIRECTOR  
You're late.  
(beat)  
We can skip makeup.

**55 INT. WAREHOUSE - DURING FILMING**

**55**

"Agent Jack Novak" is alone in a room opposite Konstantin, his Communist handler. "Jack" is tied to a metal chair.

KONSTANTIN  
You will not break. Admirable.

"JACK"  
Nothing to break. I'm telling the truth.

Konstantin steps calmly towards "Jack" and slaps him across the face. Carroll reels in real pain, spits on the floor. His eyes look far away, he's still processing last night.

KONSTANTIN

You swear you did not betray your comrades? You are still devoted to undermining the capitalist empire of the United States?

"JACK"

Devotion? You're asking me about devotion?

As we hear "Jack"'s speech, we see:

56 INTERCUT - INT. CARROLL'S HOME

56

Window broken, glass strewn, door ajar. We pull back to Carroll's kitchen, then down to his trashcan. Empty.

"JACK" (V.O.)

My family hasn't looked me in the eye in years. My own brother hates my guts.

57 INTERCUT - EXT. ROAD

57

Rose sits in her car pulled off the side of the road. She gazes up at the billboard for *The Unloved Woman*.

"JACK" (V.O.)

I've given the best years of my life to the cause, and I don't even get a thank you. A "good job Jack."

58 INTERCUT - INT. MOTEL ROOM

58

Frankie Hodges watches the reel over and over again, her eyes steely.

"JACK" (V.O.)

And I don't complain. When you tie me to this chair every time something goes wrong, I don't complain.

59 INTERCUT - EXT. HOLLYWOOD HILLS 59

Police cars circle around the broken body of Muscles lying on the side of the twisty roads.

"JACK" (V.O.)

Because I know there's something more at stake here. More than just you and me, more than the pathetic, petty people I call "comrade" every day.

60 INTERCUT - INT. AL'S HOME/OFFICE 60

A trash bag sits on Al's table. He flips through incriminating photo after photo. He starts to smile.

"JACK" (V.O.)

So yeah, I'm devoted. If I wasn't devoted, I would have turned you all over years ago.

61 INTERCUT - INT. JACK'S HOME 61

Jack reads a letter, official FBI Letterhead. It begins with "We're sorry to inform you--"

"JACK" (V.O.)

But I won't. Because if I falter, it means that every time my mother hasn't answered the phone, every time you've spit in my eye-

62 INTERCUT - HOLLYWOOD HILLS 62

A uniformed officer finds a wallet in the dirt. He opens it up, pulling out the driver's license: "Carroll Whitmire."

"JACK" (V.O.)

-every single thing I've given up for the cause, for you, for everyone in the entire damned world would be for nothing. And *that*, that's worse than anything you can do to me. That's the worst thing I can imagine. So go ahead, torture me. It won't change a thing. "Comrade."

**63 INT. WAREHOUSE - DURING FILMING****63**

Back to the set. Carroll stares at Konstantin, exhausted, angry, confused, terrified of what the next day will bring.

RON, THE DIRECTOR

Cut!

(beat)

Maybe dial it back a bit.

**SMASH TO BLACK**

**END**