

A Tragedy in Tijuana
by
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EXT. STREET — DAY

A WOMAN, 30's, comes out of run-down LA apartment building accompanied by ANNABELLE (ANNIE) LURIE. Annie is 12, but already very shapely and promises to be a blonde bombshell.

HERBERT SCHAFER, 50's. (Narrator) A tired man with a tired voice...

SCHAFER (VO)

See, when I first met Annie.
I had no idea of her background.
What I did learn, I picked up from
things she let drop, or things
other people told me. Anyway,
little by little, I was able to
piece it together pretty well.

"UNCLE BOB", a bum in a tee shirt, follows women out and stands waiting in entrance.

WOMAN pauses at bottom of steps and hands Annie a couple of bucks.

WOMAN

Now you be a good girl, Annie,
and listen to Uncle Bob.

ANNIE

But —

WOMAN

Listen, Bob pays the rent.
Just remember that. He's
not so bad. At least he
never hits us like —

Uncle Bob is looking slyly at Annie. She understands.

INT. COURTROOM — DAY

ANNIE is a few years older. Very sexy clothing.

DEFENDANT is pleasant man in 30's. Pale and drawn.

ANNIE

I told him I was eighteen. I really did. He thought I was eighteen.

Defendant looks gratefully at Annie.

INT. TATTOO PARLOR — NIGHT

Annie, 19 now, is seated with her back to viewers. TATTOO ARTIST is tattooing something on her breasts.

INT. DRESSY STRIP LOUNGE — NIGHT

Crowded. WEAR EAR PLUGSS. Dancers gyrate around fireman's pole on stage surrounded by hungry men who sit and stand around stage.

Annie is working as a cocktail waitress. When she bends over customers with drinks, her blouse falls easily forward revealing a little blue bird above each aureole.

Annie looks harassed as she moves from table to table. She delivers drinks to a table seating two YOUNG MEN.

YOUNG MAN, 28, slick. Hands Annie a card.

YOUNG MAN

You'd look better up there than most of those cows. I'm Gage. Give me a ring. I can place you.

ANNIE

You're an agent?

INT. SAME CLUB — NIGHT

Annie is up on the stage working the firepole. She's hot and men can't take their eyes off her. They are fascinated by the little bluebirds, and when she squats to let them stuff bills into her bikini, her thighs flex and the tattooed word: ENTER is clearly visible with a little blue arrow pointing northward.

INT. LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Gage enters to surprise Annie and a HUNK wrestling on the couch. Big argument MOS and: Annie angrily packing a bag.

INT. SAME CLUB – NIGHT

Annie is onstage dancing.

Herbert Schafer is in his 50's. Clean, but clearly a man who has worked for a living. Looks uncomfortable in his suit and tie. Hard hands that have labored. He's seated at edge of stage nursing a cocktail.

HERBERT (VO)

I never went out much. But a man gets lonely. This particular night I passed a club featuring a dancer named Candi. It looked like a lot was going on, so I thought what the heck.

Annie (aka Candi) slides to a squatting position right in front of Herbert and lets him see what she's got. Herbert is obviously so smitten that if someone had yelled FIRE he wouldn't have noticed.

EXT. SIDE DOOR OF CLUB – NIGHT

Schafer is waiting sophomorically with a bouquet of flowers as Annie exits.

HERBERT (VO Cont'd.)

After a couple of visits I asked if I could see Candi after work sometime. I – I guess I'm a pretty good tipper. I mean, I know I'm no great shakes to look at – I never was much with the ladies anyway.

(MORE)

HERBERT (VO Cont'd.)

I never even had
time to meet any ladies much
when I was fishing day and night.
But by golly, she let me see her,
and pretty soon we got serious.

INT. VEGAS WEDDING CHAPEL - NIGHT

While an ASSISTANT videotapes the ceremony, Herbert and Annie are getting married by MINISTER and a couple of FISHERMEN who work buy little bags of rice from an ATTENDANT.

INT. MODEST LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Herbert nods in front of TV with a can of beer in one hand. Annie moves uncertainly about the room.

HERBERT (VO)

I should have known I couldn't
keep a girl like Annie happy.
I adored her. I really did that,
but God, by dinnertime I'm all
worn out. I'm 'bout ready for
bed and naturally a beautiful
young lady like Annie doesn't
want to sit around doing nothing.
I know she was used to a little
more action, working in clubs and
all - not that she was a bad
girl. One time I did say something
about her you know, lifestyle before,
and she said, What's so bad about
doing what feels so good? But she
didn't have to work any more. I mean,
I got three boats working now, and I
could take care of her. I gave her
credit cards. I have an idea she ran
up to LA most every day while I was
at the office.

INT. A LOUNGE - DAY

Annie is sitting at bar with a BUSINESSMAN, chatting and drinking. Businessman gets off stool.

BUSINESSMAN

I'll be right back.

As he heads for the restrooms, a slick HUNK in lounge suit saunters in from the bright sunlight outside. He heads straight for Annie.

HUNK

Hi. I'm Brett.

CANDI

Hi, Brett. I'm Candi. Were you going to ask me if I come here often?

BRETT

No, I was going to ask if I could buy you a drink.

CANDI

Oh, attitude. Well, I like a man with attitude — and you've got the right attitude.

Brett settles in and orders drinks as:

Businessman returns from restrooms. He sees Brett and Annie head to head. He snorts angrily as he heads for the exit.

EXT. HOLLYWOOD SIDE STREET — DAY

Brett and Annie come out of a motel laughing. They get into his BMW convertible (top down). They're half drunk and laughing.

INT. BMW — DAY

Driving down Wilshire Boulevard in medium traffic. Brett and Annie are laughing and having a great time as Annie notices a billboard showing a happy hip couple toasting Margaritas in front of a Mexican background. Sign reads:

FOR A GREAT MARGARITA, COME TO TIJUANA

They pass the sign and Annie is thinking. She leans closer and whispers to Brett.

BRETT

Tijuana? Hold up. That's quite a ride, Baby.

Annie pats the red leather seat.

ANNIE

I bet in this baby we could make it in two hours flat. And I want a real Margarita. Are you man enough to get it for me or what...Brett..?

BRETT

One Margarita coming up!

EXT. COAST HIGHWAY — DAY

The Beemer is blazing southward. The wind blows Annie's blonde hair and the Pacific sparkles to their right.

EXT. PARKING LOT BY BORDER — NIGHT

It is getting dark now as Brett parks the car.

BRETT

We'll catch a taxi. I don't want to take the car across.

ANNIE

You're the boss.

INT. BAR — NIGHT

The bar is big, busy and NOISY. A long bar runs down the left side while tables fill most of the floor save for a small dance floor and bandstand toward rear. On the mezzanine other tables surround the sides of the room. The band BLASTS Mexican cowboy songs.

Most of the women are b-girls and there are plenty of them. They dance with tourists, both sailors and civilians, mostly young, but there is a good sampling of older men as well, each accompanied by an adoring b-girl.

Brett and Annie have been sitting at a table for a while, according to the glasses. They're having a good time when Brett excuses himself and heads for restrooms.

After a moment, Annie gets up and wanders toward front.

EXT. AVENIDA DE LA REVOLUCIÓN – NIGHT

It is early evening now. This, the main street, is full of pedestrians, native and tourists alike. Music POURS out of bars and cafés. Street venders, HAWKING etc. and the avenue is choked with HONKING taxis and other motor traffic. Dogs slink surreptitiously along.

ANNIE wanders along the avenue smiling and feeling no pain. Turns into a side street.

INT. BAR – NIGHT

This bar is mostly men. But jukebox is LOUD. ANNIE sits at bar enjoying a drink in the company of a MAN IN SUIT.

EXT. SIDE STREET – NIGHT

ANNIE comes out of a bar and stops, catching the eye of a slender young RICARDO MONTALBÁN TYPE in white shirt standing across the street.

TYPE

¿Qué hubo?

ANNIE

Hey...

She unsteadily crosses the street.

INT. BAR — NIGHT

LOUD jukebox. Type and Annie sitting together at a table. He's showing her how to knock tequila back with lime and salt and the room ROARS around Annie's head. The scene spins and blurs into different bars as different MEN sit with Annie and now:

Annie is talking to RICK, 25, upscale young American.

RICK

I was supposed to be back in San Diego five hours ago. I had to come down to San Ysidro on business but I wasn't supposed to come over here. Jesus. My fiancée is going to kill me. We live together, you know. She's going to be so pissed. I know I should call but I haven't got the guts. I don't know what to do. I'm really fucked up. Oh, pardon my French.

He tries to put salt between his thumb and forefinger but misses. The salt spatters to the bar top. He licks his thumb anyway and knocks back his tequila. He shudders and pushes his hair from his eyes.

RICK

I don't know what I'm going to do.

ANNIE

I could call her for you. I could tell her you're sick or something.

RICK

Could you? You think — Ah, we couldn't say I'm sick. She wouldn't buy that. How about the car broke down and I had to go for repairs — or something?

ANNIE

I'll take care of it.

RICK

Would you? I mean —

FAT OWNER stands at end of counter eating tacos and drinking beer.

Rick talks to fat owner. Owner wipes his hands on a towel and accepts some money. Owner shows them into his little office.

INT. TINY CLUTTERED OFFICE – NIGHT

Annie sits on corner of desk and talks on phone.

ANNIE

Now, I know this sounds phony as hell, Brittany. But Rick's car broke down over here and he had to go to Tijuana to get a new tire. He'll be back in the morning, okay?

Stricken, Rick leaves the office while Annie continues to smile and murmur into mouthpiece MOS.

EXT. SIDE STREET – NIGHT

Annie exits bar feeling pretty self-satisfied.

Series of shots of Annie entering and exiting back street bars.

INT. PULQUERÍA – NIGHT

Seen through blurred eyes, this small place is very plain with doors laid on barrels along left to form a bar. Two BARTENDERS stand behind "bar" dipping milky liquid from open barrels and pouring it into glasses.

Save for Annie, the room is crowded with men only. A few tables and a small counter around perimeter of room for drinkers. In the back right corner, an open urinal, constantly in use.

Annie is making horrible grimaces as she downs pulque in the company of an older MAN with gold teeth.

MAN

'E good, no?

The room spins and:

INT. JAIL CELL — DAY

Annie is standing against wall by toilet. Above her head a small barred window lets in bright sunlight. Annie realizes that she is in a large open cell. Two sides are walled. There are no beds and the room is filled with women. The third and fourth walls are barred from floor to ceiling through which a larger room leads somewhere.

Police and cuffed prisoners move back and forth in the outer room. A few of the women hang on the bars and BS with policemen and guards. Lots of milling about among women and guards. TALKING.

Across the cell, TEQUILA WOMAN, 50, looks at Annie and waddles over to her.

TEQUILA WOMAN

You all right, Lady? You need a drink?

ANNIE

A drink? I could use a drink.

TEQUILA WOMAN

You got some money?

Annie feels around in the few pockets she has. Nothing.

Disappointed, the woman moves away but suddenly:

The woman is back with a small glass filled with amber fluid. Annie takes it gratefully and downs it in one gulp. It is like firewater going down, but has its effect.

TEQUILA WOMAN

That better, no? He tequila añejo, the bes' kind. When you get out you pay me, no? Fi' dollars.

ANNIE

(Breathless)

Yes. Okay, sure.

Time passes and the woman gives Annie another shot or two. Now Annie feels a lot better and stands at the bars BS'ing with some of the guards too. Tequila woman has a business going, selling everything from cigarettes, candy and booze to pens and paper. Guards are customers too.

HÉCTOR ARCHULETA, 30's. Short and darkly handsome. Wears the brown uniform of policeman with leather A2 flight jacket and snappy pilot's cap. Pearl handled .45 Colt automatic on hip at half-cock.

ANNIE

I don't even know why I'm in here.

HÉCTOR

They said you threw a glass at somebody.

ANNIE

I threw a glass? Me? Well, if I did there must have been a reason. I'm not like that.

HÉCTOR

Maybe you were trying to break up a fight or something. There was a fight.

ANNIE

When am I going to get out?

HÉCTOR

I don't know. When the capitán comes. We'll see. Usually we go easy on Americans. We want them to be happy when they come down here.

ANNIE

You sure speak good English.

HÉCTOR

Oh, I lived up in LA for a long time. But my uncle, he's a cop over here and he got me on the force. So here I am, fighting for justice.

Héctor touches Annie's fingers.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Maybe I could get you out for a little while anyway...

ANNIE

Could you? I'd like that...Héctor.

A moment later Héctor returns with a guard who opens the cell door for Annie to come out.

TEQUILA WOMAN

Don' forget to come back and pay me, Lady. Twenty dollars.

ANNIE

Don't worry. I won't forget. Gracias.

Héctor dons mirrored sunglasses.

INT. FORD - DAY

HÉCTOR

I told them you're sick. I'm supposed to be taking you to the hospital. We got a couple or three hours.

EXT. SMALL HOTEL - DAY

El Campestre is a small run-down hotel on a dingy side street. The Ford stops at curb.

EXT. COURTYARD — DAY

The hotel is a square with a cobbled courtyard. A dry fountain stands in center. Benches. A few child's toys lie around and a couple of empty beer cans. Dog dozing in corner. Annie is sitting on a bench as a smiling Héctor walks back with a paper bag containing canned beer and a couple of bottles of mescal.

INT. HOTEL ROOM — DAY

The room is sad and worn out. Annie and Héctor wrestle on chipped iron bed and then sit drinking. Héctor smokes Camels off and on.

ANNIE

There's something in the bottle.

HÉCTOR

Oh, that's the worm. That's part of the tradition. Eat it.

Bravely, Annie does. Héctor didn't expect that.

ANNIE

Mmmm...crunchy.

HÉCTOR

Boy, you pretty good.

Time passes while they drink and wrestle and now Héctor is sleeping on the bed nude while Annie walks about the room. She looks out the window and looks at Héctor.

EXT. SIDE STREET — DAY

It's getting dark.

Wearing Héctor's snappy officer's cap and leather flight jacket with his badge on it, Annie saunters down the street, heading toward the nearest bar.

MONTAGE: 1. Sitting in a bar with a FAT BUSINESSMAN.
 2. Another bar with a YOUNG BUCK. 3. Eating food and
 drinking beer in a café with a TAXI DRIVER. 4. Throwing
 up in gutter. 5. Sitting in another bar with FAT
 BUSINESSMAN #2.

INT. SMALL BAR – NIGHT

PANCHO, 70. Gringo. White hair and whiskers. Tired and
 bent, but has intelligent eyes.

Annie sits with Pancho at a table and they drink beer.

PANCHO

When I first came over here, somebody
 named me Pancho. I just get a little
 veteran's check. I get a lot more bang
 for my buck on this side of the border.
 And besides, I make my own gnôle and
 save a bundle in the process.

ANNIE

What's gnôle?

PANCHO

Booze. I worked in Tahiti
 for seven years. That's
 what we called booze down
 there.

ANNIE

Let's go to your place and
 try some homemade gnôle.

INT. SMALL CINDERBLOCK ROOM – NIGHT.

Bare bulb hangs from ceiling. Single bed against wall
 with small window above. Left is a hotplate and small
 sink and frig. Table and a couple of chairs. That's it.

ANNIE

Wow. This is your place?

PANCHO

Hey, I'm not Bill Gates.

He tilts a plastic milk jug and pours a couple of glasses
 of gnôle.

PANCHO
Here. Cheers.

ANNIE
Not bad.

PANCHO
Not half bad. I buy a five
gallon cans of alcohol across the
street and mix two parts with one
part Kool-Aid and voilà, a great
drink – and you never get a hangover.

ANNIE
That's for me. I hate hangovers.

Annie sits on edge of bed and Pancho sits on chair. They
chat and drink.

PANCHO
I hated to leave Tahiti.
Women down there – in Tahiti
girls are trained from day
one to please a man. That's
their mission in life. I
mean anything less than four
hours is a quickie in Tahiti.

ANNIE
You old rake.

LATER.

Annie has taken off her coat and hat and lies sleeping on
the bed. Pancho sits on his chair and sips booze.
He looks at her longingly and lovingly.

LATER.

Annie awakes to a dark empty room. After a few moments
she stirs and wanders around; can't find the light.
Without coat and cap she opens the door.

EXT. STREET – NIGHT

Across the street a small grocery is faintly alight. As
Annie crosses street a stray dog shyly rubs against her
leg. Pancho is not in the store. Annie wonders what
happened to him.

INT. SMALL BARS - NIGHT

MONTAGE. 1. Standing at bar talking to a couple of MEN in western attire. 2. Sitting at table talking to a FAT MAN in suit. 3. Heading out of a bar while MEN watch her.

INT. SMALL BAR - NIGHT

Jukebox SHAKES THE RAFTERS. Annie enters. CUSTOMERS are mostly women, big and heavy. Lo and behold, there sits Pancho at the bar.

ANNIE

Hey, how come you ran off
and left me in the dark?

PANCHO

You were sleeping so quietly I
thought I'd get out and let you
rest. That bed isn't big enough
for both of us - not side by
side anyway.

ANNIE

Well...?

PANCHO

Hey, ten years ago. Maybe even
five...

Pancho sips his beer and looks wistful.

PANCHO (CONT'D)

But not today, Annie.
It's been too long.

He signals to BARTENDER who brings Annie tequila and a bottle of beer.

PANCHO

Where's the coat?

ANNIE

Oh, I guess it's still
at your place.

PANCHO

I wish you hadn't taken it.
That cop's going to be one
mad hombre.

ANNIE

Héctor? Oh, he's cool.
Besides, I think he's
in love with me. I'll
be back with it before
he even wakes up.
Boy, this is where the
big girls hang out.

PANCHO

I call it the Beef Trust.
For some reason the big
girls seem to gravitate
to this place.

ANNIE

I guess I ought to go find
a phone and call home. My
husband is probably getting
frantic by now.

She gets off stool.

PANCHO

Are you sure you can find
my place again? You don't
want to lose that jacket.
Your cop won't like that -
it could get him in trouble.

ANNIE

I can find it. Tijuana's
jus' a leetle town. I have
to find my ride too. He
better not take off without
me. I better find Brett.

EXT. AVENIDA DE LA REVOLUCIÓN - NIGHT

Annie moves along the NOISY crowded street. Spots the big
bar where she left Brett.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Annie wanders about inside NOISY bar. Girls give her
dirty looks and most of the men are preoccupied with their
own girls. No sign of Brett. B-girl sidles up.

B-GIRL

Hey, go back where you come
from, ojos azules. We don'
need you 'round here.

Rebuffed, Annie stands uncertainly, then heads for entrance.

EXT. DARK SIDE STREET - NIGHT

Annie moves slowly along the street toward a lighted cantina further on.

INT. CANTINA - NIGHT

Annie sits at bar with HEAVY MAN in suit and straw hat.

Two POLICEMEN enter. Policeman #1 points to Annie.

POLICEMAN #1
Ahí está.

Straw hat man slides quickly down from his stool and heads for the restroom.

POLICEMAN #2
You come with us.

ANNIE
Where's Héctor?

POLICEMAN #1
We take you.

EXT. DARK STREET - NIGHT

The police car draws to curb before a square that contains a raised park. Three steps at corners. The park is dark. A small bandstand in the center is lighted from inside the roof by a small yellow bulb.

The police and Annie emerge from the vehicle and they lead her up and along the walk to the bandstand. Up another three or four steps into the bandstand as:

Héctor (hatless and coatless) emerges from the shadow. His pearl handled Colt gleams hugely at his hip. He carries a heavy rubber truncheon in his hand.

ANNIE
Héctor! I've been looking
all over hell for you. Where've
you been?

HÉCTOR

Oh...yes? I been looking for you too. Where's my jacket and my cap?

Annie realizes that Héctor is pretty unhappy with her.

ANNIE

Oh...I – I left them at a friend's house for safekeeping. We can go get them. I don't know what you're all upset about. You went to sleep on me. That's not a nice thing to do to a girl. Anyway, you knew I was coming back...Héctor. I mean, we do have something, don't we?

HÉCTOR

Where is this place – your friend?

Annie suddenly realizes she hasn't the faintest idea of how to get back to Pancho's place. Héctor sees that.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Whore. You want to get me fired or what? I try to help you a little bit and look what you do to me. Everybody laughing at me. I supposed to bring you back six hours ago. I can't believe you go around stealing policemen's badges.

Annie starts laughing hysterically.

ANNIE

Badges? We don't need no stinking badges.

Héctor's expression immediately sobers Annie.

ANNIE (CONT'D)

All right! I'm sorry. I didn't mean to get you in trouble, Héctor.

HÉCTOR

You're the one in trouble, bitch.
Oh, you in plenty of trouble all
right. You in trouble with me.

He steps fully into the light from above now and slaps
the truncheon in his hand.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Nobody pull this shit
on Héctor Archuleta.

The police grab Annie by each arm as Héctor takes another
step forward.

POLICEMAN #1

Not in the face. Don't touch
the face.

Unheeding, Héctor grabs at Annie, jerking her forward.
The policemen release her and step back. The truncheon
comes down hard against her ribs. Annie GASPS and RETCHES
as Héctor hits her again.

The policemen grimly watch as Héctor continues to slam the
truncheon against Annie's tortured body. Annie is so
dazed and in such great pain that even though her mouth is
wide open, no sound comes out.

Annie's body is slipping into unconsciousness as Héctor
vainly tries to hold her up where he can punish her.

HÉCTOR

Shut your snout, puta...

He raises the truncheon again and again until he can no
long hold her and Annie slides to the floor unconscious in
the weak light from the bulb overhead. He kicks at her
with his foot.

POLICEMAN #2

¡Ya! You going to kill her man.

Héctor nudges her with his foot again, but less violently.

HÉCTOR

So? Maybe I will.

He gives her one last nudge.

HÉCTOR (CONT'D)

Whore.

Suddenly, Policeman #1 drops to his knee and examines Annie more closely.

POLICEMAN #1
¡Ay! She bleeding.

Héctor drops to one knee too. Blood is trickling from her mouth.

HÉCTOR
Ah, she just bit her lip, I think.

But now blood begins trickling from Annie's nostrils.

POLICEMAN #1
I better call the ambulance. Listen to me, Héctor. We tell them we found her on the street. Maybe she got hit by a car. We don't know. You go home now. We take care of it.

Policeman #1 gets laboriously to his feet and lumbers off to car.

HÉCTOR
Dirty bitch. Now I'm never going to find my shit. Why she do this to me.? What? I try to help the bitch a little. That's all I did.

INT. SCHAFFER HOME — DAY

Herbert sits before TV in his undershirt.

HERBERT (VO)
I didn't know whether to call the police or what. I was scared that Annie had run out on me and wasn't coming back. I mean, I could take that, but nobody even called. I had to find out on the TV...

ANNOUNCER on TV

ANNOUNCER

On a sadder note, San Pedro resident Annabelle Schafer, twenty-four, was pronounced dead on arrival at Miguel Alemán Hospital in Tijuana as a result of injuries incurred early yesterday morning after being struck by a hit-and-run driver. The case is under investigation by local authorities.

FADE OUT

HERBERT (VO)

Nobody even called me till three days later...

The End