

PAST TRANSGRESSIONS

written by

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FADE IN:

EXT. ALAMEDA MARINA - CABIN CRUISER - DAY

The morning sun bathes the marina. A large cabin cruiser sits in its slip. HARRY CHEN and EVELYN CHEN, both early cast off its lines.

At the stern, Evelyn struggles with hers.

EVELYN
Harry, help me.

As Harry casts off his bow line, he looks up.

HARRY
Sure, honey.

He walks to where she stands. They untangle her line. She kisses him lightly on the lips.

EVELYN
Happy?

HARRY
Very. Evelyn, let's get going.
It's a long way to Santa Barbara.

He quickly makes his way to the flying bridge. He steers the boat out into the channel.

EXT. MARINA PARKING LOT - DAY

Beside a car, PHILIP HO, early 20s, has his thumb poised on the button of a remote detonator. He watches the boat transit the channel.

EXT. CABIN CRUISER - DAY

While the boat moves slowly down the channel, Evelyn walks to the stern.

EXT. MARINA PARKING LOT - DAY

Ho presses the detonator.

EXT. CHANNEL - DAY

A fiery explosion engulfs the boat. Debris flies in every direction. On nearby boats, people look with disbelief as the debris burns.

EXT. LARGE HOME - PATIO - NIGHT

A shadowy figure creeps up behind a young guard who holds an AK-47. A knifehand strike to the back of the neck and down he goes. The figure moves toward a patio door.

SUPER: "SAN FRANCISCO, SEVENTEEN YEARS LATER."

INT. LARGE HOUSE - OFFICE - NIGHT

The room is strictly upscale.

Three men sit around a desk. Behind the desk, MAN #1 smiles as he hands cigars to what are his accomplices in crime. On the desk, is a brief case that brims with cash.

MAN #1
Time for the split.

MAN #2 rubs his hands together.

MAN #2
Man, I've been waitin' for this.

MAN #3 leans forward in his chair.

MAN #3
The fruit of a dishonest living.

The three men burst into laughter.

The patio door flies open and in steps SHARI CHEN, 28, with her Walther 380 drawn. She's a natural beauty who needs little help from Cover Girl. Under her business casual attire, is a methodical and poised private detective.

She trains her gun on the three men.

SHARI
Laughs on you.

The men glance at each other.

SHARI
The insurance company will be glad to get this back.

She steps farther into the room.

Man #3 jumps to his feet and produces a sleeve derringer. Shari shoots him in the arm, and he drops the weapon. He grimaces in pain as he sits back down.

Man #1 slowly opens the center desk drawer.

SHARI
Don't try it.

He pushes the drawer closed.

SHARI
Doubt your insurance covers lead
poisoning.

She takes an iphone from her pocket.

SHARI
I'll just call Detective Hadley to
pick up the trash.

She places the call and puts the phone to her ear. Her eyes
survey the three men.

INT. SHANGHAI MARKET PLACE - DAY

The store is a medium-sized Asian grocery with several
checkout lanes. Everything from woks, produce, and canned
goods are on display.

Shari pushes her cart through the produce section. She
selects a head of bok choy and continues down the aisle. She
picks up a bunch of long beans and looks at it curiously.
She turns to a YOUNG CLERK.

SHARI
(Cantonese; subtitled)
These long beans look somewhat dry.
Is this fresh?

YOUNG CLERK
(Cantonese; subtitled)
Yes, arrived yesterday.

She looks them over again and places the long bean into her
cart. She continues down the aisle.

LILI CHEN, a small woman, 20, conservatively dressed,
intermittently pushes a cart down an aisle as she looks
about. Cute and witty, she's Shari's younger sister.

Lili spots Shari and pushes her cart over to her sister.

SHARI
Lili, what brings you here?

LILI
I might ask you the same question.
Tired of chasing criminals or has
uncle Jimmy given you the day off?

SHARI
Just picking up a few things. You?

LILI
A couple of girls from school are getting together; I'll prepare something.

SHARI
We still on for tomorrow?

LILI
Would I let my sister down?

Shari looks at her watch.

SHARI
Gotta run. Giving a deposition.

LILI
Far be it from me to keep you from your work.

INT. NIGHTCLUB - NIGHT

Patrons drink and enjoy themselves in a friendly atmosphere. Entangled couples laugh and whisper in their booths. A musical ensemble plays loudly, and patrons move aimlessly around the dance floor.

BENNY LIM, a small-time hoodlum, your basic looser, sits at the bar. A person of rather good looks, he's in his early thirties. He sips his drink.

Beside him sits an attractive REDHEAD, 30ish.

BENNY
I was thinking we --

A brash and loud DRUNKARD about 31 interrupts. Several buttons on his shirt are open. His hold on a bottle of beer is precarious.

DRUNKARD
-- Hello, you're the best-looking woman in the joint.

The Drunkard elbows his way between the Redhead and Benny. The Redhead looks more than a little irritated.

REDHEAD
Get lost.

The Drunkard puts his arm around the Redhead's shoulder. The Redhead tries to pull away. The Drunkard holds on. Benny pulls his arm off. He gives the Drunkard a slight shove with the palm of his hand.

BENNY

The lady said blow.

DRUNKARD

I'll go when damn good and ready.

He gives Benny a hard push. Benny slides backward along the bar and into other patrons. Benny steps around the patrons; he lunges at the Drunkard.

The hulking BARTENDER, 40s, speaks up.

BARTENDER

Hey, knock it off! I don't want my place busted up.

Benny and the Drunkard face each other. The Drunkard slowly turns away. Benny turns back to the Redhead.

Suddenly, the Drunkard grabs Benny from behind, gets him in a hammerlock, and presses him against the bar.

DRUNKARD

You're a sucker, a cockroach.

The Drunkard forces Benny's face toward the top of the bar and into a bowl of nuts.

DRUNKARD

(to the Redhead)

Well, look at that? Your boyfriend likes nuts.

(to Benny)

You're in the wrong bar. Your bar's a block away. There you can get a face full of sausage.

Benny swells with rage.

DRUNKARD

Maybe you'll like this.

He thrusts himself several times against Benny's buttocks as though having sex. He leans near Benny's ear and laughs.

DRUNKARD

How's that?

BENNY

You bastard! I'll kill you!

The Bartender angrily throws his towel into the sink. He stomps around to the front of the bar.

BARTENDER

Meatheads, take it out back.

He points toward the back door. The Drunkard releases Benny.

BENNY

Stay here, baby. I'll take care of this asshole.

REDHEAD

Don't do it.

The Drunkard and Benny walk to the back. Benny grips the handle of the heavy-metal door and forces it open. The door swings wide. Its hinge emits a loud squeak.

The Drunkard plants his foot squarely on Benny's butt and gives a push. Benny loses his balance and sprawls onto the pavement of the alley.

EXT. NIGHTCLUB - ALLEY - NIGHT

A trickle of dirty water runs through the middle of the concrete alley. Two wall mounted lamp fixtures provide light and cast shadows.

Benny gets to his feet. He rushes the Drunkard and like a linebacker hits him low. They almost fall onto the pavement. They exchange multiple punches; neither man gains an advantage.

The Drunkard lands a solid punch and slows Benny down. He delivers another left to the jaw.

Benny, the shorter and lighter man, stumbles backward and falls to the pavement. His nose and mouth are bloodied and his jacket torn.

DRUNKARD

Get up!

Benny gets to his feet. He reaches into his pants and flashes a .38 snubby. He points it at the Drunkard. Stunned by knockdowns, his grip on the weapon is shaky. He shouts.

BENNY

You son of a bitch! Keep away!

DRUNKARD

Gutless punk. I'll shove that gun
up your ass.

He plods toward Benny with his hands outstretched like claws.

BENNY

Keep back I tell ya!

The Drunkard lunges forward and grabs for the weapon. They struggle; it discharges with a dull pop.

With a look of disbelief, the Drunkard slumps facedown onto the pavement.

Benny looks around and quickly returns the weapon to his waistband. He wipes blood from his nose.

Two uniformed officers run down the alley, guns drawn. One officer is built like a beanpole with arms. The beanpole officer is out in front. The other officer a stocky female brings up the rear.

Benny slowly raises his hands.

EXT. LARGE BUILDING - DAY

There are several police cars parked in front. Two uniformed officers escort a handcuffed young chippy into the building. The sign on the wall reads: "7TH PRECINCT."

INT. 7TH PRECINCT - INTERVIEW ROOM 3 - DAY

The room is small and well lit. A metal table and several metal chairs occupy the center. There are two windows along one wall.

Benny Lim sits in a chair and leans against the edge of the table. Elbow on the table and head in hand, he looks tired. A smudge of blood is on the shoulder of his jacket. Dirty sewage marks permeate the rest of his clothes.

Three men who wear ties stand around him.

BENNY

That's what happened, Detective
Dawson.

MIKE DAWSON, shirt collar open and tie pulled loose, is a nonsense detective. In his late thirties, he projects an air of authority. He removes his jack and slings it over the back of one of the chairs.

DAWSON

Lim, why'd you take him on?

BENNY

The bastard was treating a lady like shit.

DAWSON

That the way you treat bastards? I mean... do you just blow them away?

Benny kicks the adjacent chair. It slides across the floor and flips onto its back.

BENNY

You can't pin anything on me. Self-defense. I didn't even know the guy.

DAWSON

Well enough to kill him. Why were you carrying heat?

BENNY

A habit.

DAWSON

You threatened him.

BENNY

Talk.

Benny defiantly looks at Dawson. He then checks his watch.

BENNY

We done? Anybody got a cigarette?

Dawson tosses him a pack of cigarettes and matches. Benny catches them, takes one from the pack, and lights it. He inhales deeply.

BENNY

Thanks.

DAWSON

Jordan, talk to the bum. I've been talking for hours.

JORDAN, 31, black, steps forward and leans over Lim. He has close-cropped hair and muscles that bulge.

JORDAN

Why should we believe that shit? You were alone with the guy.

(MORE)

JORDAN (CONT'D)

How you gonna convince a jury you
didn't just pop him?

Benny blows smoke in Jordan's face.

BENNY

Stop busting my balls, musclehead.

Jordan grabs Benny, one hand on his throat and the other on
his crotch.

JORDAN

Bust your balls? You fuckin'
Chink, I'll rip the goddamn things
off.

Jordan looks at the third detective.

JORDAN

Yablonski, open a window. This
sack of shit is stinkin' up the
place.

Jordan releases his grip on Benny.

YABLONSKI, 26, is boyish, like fresh out of the academy.

He opens the Venetian blind; sunlight flashes off the glass.
He lifts the sash all the way.

BENNY

When you tell the truth, why don't
cops believe you?

JORDAN

Because you're lyin'. I've been
dealin' with pricks like you for
years. Frankly, it's enough to
make me puke.

Dawson walks over and stands across the table from Benny.

DAWSON

You're lucky they did away with the
gas chamber.

JORDAN

C'mon, shit bag. We wanna go home,
and you can go play with yourself.

YABLONSKI

You're going back inside for
murder.

Jordan gets in Benny's face.

JORDAN
I'm losin' my patience.

Jordan grabs Benny. Benny kicks while Jordan drags him to the open window and pushes him through.

EXT. 7TH PRECINCT - INTERVIEW ROOM 3 WINDOW - DAY

Jordan hangs on to Benny's arm with both hands. Benny dangles against the side of the building. His legs dance like those of a marionette.

JORDAN
I was an offensive lineman in college, but I'm not as strong as I used to be. My kid's been sick and if my cell phone rings --

BENNY
-- Okay, I've got information on a real murder.

Jordan hauls Benny back inside.

INT. 7TH PRECINCT - INTERVIEW ROOM 3 - DAY

Jordan twists Benny's arm as he leads him away from the window. He flings Benny into the chair. The force propels the chair across the floor.

BENNY
(to Jordan)
You crazy bastard!

Dawson ambles over.

DAWSON
Okay, spit it out.

BENNY
First, I gotta piss.

Dawson grabs Benny's shoulder. Benny looks up with surprise.

DAWSON
Talk now; piss later.

Benny pulls himself from Dawson's grip.

BENNY
Vincent Ho was the hit man. Got himself wacked five years ago.

Dawson looks on intently.

BENNY

We shot pool at Sticks Pool Hall.
One night, he got a snoot full.
Told me how he offed a Chinese guy
and the guy's wife. The big boss
wanted payback to the Chens.

DAWSON

And?

BENNY

And what?

DAWSON

That's it? Who was Ho's boss?

BENNY

He didn't say. Ho was a free
lancer. Said there was a tape of
the murders being planned.

DAWSON

Any idea where it is?

BENNY

No!

DAWSON

(to Jordan)

Get somebody to take his statement.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - DAY

The office is well-organized and meticulously clean. In a
far corner, a fax machine spits out paper. A tea kettle
heats water on a portable electric burner.

The FEDEX MAN, 30ish, black, delivers a package.

FEDEX MAN

Nancy, sign here.

NANCY CHOW, 25, secretary, is the oil of a well-run machine.
She stands beside a desk. She puts on a pair of wire framed
glasses and signs.

NANCY

Thanks.

The FedEx Man leaves as the phone rings. Nancy answers.

NANCY

Chen Detective Agency, may I help you?... Chief O'Halleron, he's on another call. Can you hold?

INT. OFFICE CHIEF OF POLICE - DAY

The office is a signal the occupant is a transplanted sports nut from Boston. A photo of the 2007 World Champion Boston Red Socks hangs prominently. Other items of sports remembrance abound.

THOMAS O'HALLERON, 55, is all spit and polish in his uniform. He's a man of great resolve and pride. He sits behind his desk. He holds in one hand the phone and in the other, a baseball autographed by Ted Williams.

O'HALLERON

Yes. Hello, Jimmy.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - JIMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

The room, a conservative bastion, contains several fine works of art. A large desk sits near the window with family photos neatly arranged. Cigar smoke is visible as light streams through the window.

The pudgy gray-haired man behind the desk is in his early 60s. He wears a three-piece suit. A sign on the desk reads: "JAMES CHEN." The anchor of the agency he is the grandson of the founder.

JIMMY

Tom, haven't spoken to you in weeks. How are you and Maureen?

INT. OFFICE CHIEF OF POLICE - DAY

O'Halleron places the baseball back on its stand.

O'HALLERON

We're fine. Jimmy, this isn't a social call. I have a serious matter to discuss. It's about the deaths of --

INT. CHINESE DRY-CLEANER - DAY

The establishment is a typical small dry-cleaner. The well-worn counter is a testament to its long years of operation. As Shari enters, a bell over the door rings.

A young Chinese boy and a young Chinese girl play on the floor with brightly-colored Chinese figures. MR. FONG, 60s, the proprietor, emerges from the back.

MR. FONG
(Cantonese; subtitled)
You go in back and play.

The young Chinese boy and the young Chinese girl giggle and scurry past, arms out like airplane wings. They head toward the rear. They leave a trail of dry-cleaning bags that sway from side to side on the racks.

MR. FONG
(Cantonese; subtitled)
Hello, Miss Chen.

SHARI
(Cantonese; subtitled)
Good afternoon, Mr. Fong.

Shari hands him her claim check, and he disappears down one of the aisles. He returns with clothes in a dry-cleaning bag and hangs them on a hook.

MR. FONG
(Cantonese; subtitled)
Thirty-seven fifty, Miss Chen.

Shari digs into her purse, produces a wallet, and pays. She lifts the dry-cleaning bag from the hook and views the items through the plastic before she and heads for the door.

FONG
(Cantonese; subtitled)
Come soon. Two for one next week.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - JIMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy jots notes on a pad.

JIMMY
I understand, Tom. The agency will begin its own investigation.

INT. OFFICE CHIEF OF POLICE - DAY

O'Halleron rocks back in his chair.

O'HALLERON
I have men on the case. We'll need a break, or I won't be able to keep'em assigned.

A dark-haired female enters and places a package onto his desk. O'Halleron nods. She walks out.

O'HALLERON

Losing Harry and Evelyn was difficult for your family. The loss of Benson made it worse.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

JIMMY

They haven't been easy years.

O'HALLERON

I'm sure you still miss him.

JIMMY

When he got his sergeant's stripes, Benson was so happy. Later, cancer got him.

Jimmy has a somber look. He pauses.

JIMMY

Well, I still have Shari. Wants to be a good detective like her great-granddad.

O'HALLERON

She's solved some tough cases. Jimmy, I have to go.

JIMMY

Tomorrow, I have to tell those kids. It won't be easy.

INT. 7TH PRECINCT - HOMICIDE DIVISION - DAY

The scene is organized chaos with criminals and witnesses crammed into a mostly dysfunctional office. A suspect cuffed to a chair stands and tries to break away. In an attempt to retrieve his money, a burly officer pounds on the front of a soft drink machine.

Detectives Jordan and Yablonski sit at a desk. Yablonski eats a deli sandwich. Jordan reaches over and snitches a piece of dill pickle off its wrapper.

YABLONSKI

You over acted with Lim?

Jordan takes a bite off the pickle.

JORDAN

Whad'ya mean? Another minute and that turd would've been on the pavement.

YABLONSKI

You're a tough cop, Fred.

JORDAN

Yeah, but I get results.

A uniformed pimple-faced officer and a sergeant hear them and saunter over. SERGEANT EDWARD RHOADES, 44, an arrogant looking cuss, has facial scars.

RHOADES

What the hell's this about?

YABLONSKI

Hey, Rhoades. Jordan's tooting his horn. This perp Lim was --

LATER

Jordan and Yablonski sit at the desk. Rhoades and the pimple-faced officer stand beside it.

RHOADES

That's some tale.

A short uniformed officer drags a twentysomething PUNK in cuffs past the desk. The Punk twists, pulls, and kicks at the short officer. He throws himself across the desk.

PUNK

Pigs! You damn pigs!

Jordan grabs him by the face and pushes him away.

JORDAN

Clean up this shit!

Jordan kicks at him. The short officer gets the Punk in a choke hold and drags him away.

RHOADES

We should get back to work.

YABLONSKI

Watch the bad guys. They're everywhere.

RHOADES

Don't I know it.

Rhoades points his fingers like a gun then blows on his index finger. He and the pimple-faced officer quickly walk away.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - JIMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

All five of Harry and Evelyn Chen's children sit in Jimmy's office. Shari sits next to Lili.

Lili squirms in her chair dying to get on with whatever is about to happen.

SHARI

Lili, I don't know why we're here.

LILI

You spend the most time with him.
Don't you have the inside dope?

Jimmy Chen walks in and plops into the chair behind his desk. A cigar dangles from the fingers of his left hand.

JIMMY

Thanks for coming. Harry, Emily, I know it's not easy to get away on short notice.

He takes a puff from his cigar.

JIMMY

Chief O'Halleron called. They have a man in custody who says your parents were murdered. He said your --

LATER

Jimmy paces the room. Noticeably upset, his eyes are fixed on the floor.

JIMMY

Shari, I didn't tell you because I wanted all of you to hear it at the same time.

HARRY CHEN JR., 35, well-dressed, is the oldest son of Harry and Evelyn Chen.

HARRY

I find it hard to believe. Why?
Who?

Jimmy stops his pace but continues to puff and blow smoke reminiscent of an old steam locomotive.

He removes the cigar from his mouth and looks at it. When he speaks, he points the back of it at Harry.

JIMMY

Harry, it was revenge plain and simple. They wanted to punish me and the agency for doing our jobs. As for who, that's what good detective work's about.

EMILY TANG, 33, long flowing hair, is the oldest daughter of Harry and Evelyn Chen.

EMILY

I don't understand how the police could have been so sloppy.

JIMMY

Emily, if there's no evidence of a crime, no in-depth investigation will take place.

EMILY

Why Mom and Dad? They had nothing to do with the agency.

Jimmy sits down at his desk. The buttons on his vest strain to hold back his girth.

JIMMY

That's why they became targets. How many times do innocents suffer for the deeds of others? Time to make these criminals pay for past transgressions.

SHARI

Uncle Jimmy, I don't know how great-grandfather would handle this.

She stares off into space.

SHARI

I've spent my life preparing to solve crimes. Never thought I'd be doing it for myself.

JIMMY

You're the detective; it's your case.

LILI

Shari, I'd like to help.

MORGAN CHEN, 16, is slim and clean cut with a great smile. He's the nice kid next door. Morgan wears a San Francisco Giants ball cap.

MORGAN

Me too.

Harry, now up on his feet, walks behind Morgan's chair and pats him on the shoulder.

HARRY

Morgan, you can help by taking care of school work.

Emily leans sideways and puts her hand on Shari's arm.

EMILY

We all want to do our part.

SHARI

Uncle Jimmy, I'll contact Dawson for details.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

Shari sits in her orange Shelby Ford Mustang GT500. She takes the phone out of her purse, enters a number, and presses call. She places the phone to her ear.

SHARI

Hello, Detective Dawson? Shari Chen of -- I appreciate that. What did you get from Lim relative to my parents' murders?

She listens intently.

INT. 7TH PRECINCT - HOMICIDE DIVISION - DAY

Fish swim in the small tank on Dawson's desk. He pushes aside a half-eaten TV dinner while he talks to Shari.

DAWSON

Lim mentioned three people Ho worked for. Izzy Weinstock deals in hot jewelry. Stanley Wu runs a nightclub. A front for drugs and prostitution.

A cute female officer passes his desk and places papers into his in-box.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

DAWSON

Howard Chong's a major player. Has connections to triads. His fortes are gunrunning and drugs.

SHARI

Anyone else?

DAWSON

Raymond Hsu, Chong's enforcer. Has a rap sheet as long as a roll of Charmin.

SHARI

Appreciate it. Bye and thanks.

She disconnects the call.

INT. SHARI'S MUSTANG - DAY

Shari places another call.

SHARI

Hi, Alan. How's business? We haven't talked in months.

INT. EVERYTHING COMPUTING - DAY

Personal computers, tablets, and lap tops sit in no particular arrangement. Printers, monitors, and other accessories protrude from cubbyholes. A local neighborhood yard sale has better organization than this small store.

A man sits on a stool near the counter. ALAN CROSBY is a 30-year-old computer geek. His hair is mussed. Glasses sit precariously on the end of his nose.

ALAN

Yeah, time flies. Business is good. How's San Francisco's most successful detective?

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SHARI

I've had some luck.

ALAN

You always were modest.

SHARI

I need a favor. Background information on some suspects.

Alan sighs.

ALAN

What are you getting me into now?

SHARI

The police gave me information. I want you to dig deeper.

Alan looks at and talks to the receiver.

ALAN

Why can't you settle down? Get married?

SHARI

Alan Crosby! Marriage depends on finding the right guy. Most men I meet are goons and convicts.

ALAN

What about all your friends in blue?

SHARI

I... just don't have much time for dating.

ALAN

Like me to fix you up?

SHARI

Thanks, but no.

INT. MAIN STREET JEWELERS - DAY

Posh describes this jewelry store. Shari enters, slowly walks through the store, and looks at the jewelry. Her eyebrows raise at the prices.

IZZY WEINSTOCK waits on a customer. He is pale and elderly, a weasely sort.

WEINSTOCK

Mrs. Crawford, you made a wise investment. I'll mount the stones and have it ready Wednesday. Here's your receipt.

MRS. CRAWFORD, older, socialite type, takes the receipt.

MRS. CRAWFORD

Thank you. Mr. Weinstock, you have been most helpful.

Mrs. Crawford strolls to the door and leaves.

Weinstock approaches Shari.

WEINSTOCK

Good afternoon, miss. May I show you something?

SHARI

Mind if I ask a few questions?

WEINSTOCK

All depends, go ahead. I'll work while we talk.

He picks up a tray of watches and places it carefully into a glass case. He closes the sliding door and locks it.

SHARI

Ever employ a Vincent Ho?

WEINSTOCK

Let me think. Ho?... Oh yes, long time ago. Something happened to Mr. Ho?

SHARI

Actually, he's been dead five years. How long did he work for you?

Weinstock unlocks and opens another case. He squats and positions gold bracelets within the case.

WEINSTOCK

Not long. Mr. Ho's associates were an unsavory group. I was afraid it could adversely affect business. We deal with a high-class clientele. I hired him on a friend's recommendation.

SHARI

Which friend?

He halts his task. He still squats but looks coldly into Shari's eyes.

WEINSTOCK

Sorry, that's confidential.

SHARI

Mr. Ho carry a gun?

She is right across the counter from Weinstock. He rises and leans over the counter in Shari's direction.

WEINSTOCK

Lady, you smell like a cop. I don't talk to cops.

SHARI

I'm a private detective.

WEINSTOCK

A cop's a cop.

Shari shows bewilderment at his abrupt change in attitude.

SHARI

Anyway, thank you.

Weinstock watches her walk away. Shari exits the store.

EXT. STICKS POOL HALL - DAY

The neighborhood is seedy. Overturned cans and trash are strewn about. A street-person strolls by with a bottle in a paper bag. He stops to take a swig.

Shari pulls up in front of Sticks with Lili in the car.

They exit, take a few steps, and gaze up at the building. The exterior looks like the last time it saw paint Nixon was president. The red neon sign reads: "STICKS." The ST of the sign no longer lights.

SHARI

How fitting.

Lili looks up and down the exterior of the building.

LILI

What a dump.

INT. STICKS POOL HALL - DAY

The front door opens. Shari and Lili step in and peer around before they slowly walk along one side. Worn tables and chairs line the walls. Multiple pool tables occupy the center of the room. Thick smoke wafts through the premises.

Several men gather around a pool table while two other men shoot pool.

Shari and Lili stop in front of a middle-aged SHORT MAN with a bushy mustache and goatee.

SHARI
Which one's the boss?

The Short Man points toward the back.

SHORT MAN
That's Eddie at the bar.

Most of the men give catcalls and wolf whistles as they pass their table.

EDDIE, 60s, an overweight old coot, sits on a bar stool. One hand is full of cash and a fat stogie in the other.

Eddie eyes them while he puffs on the cigar. He blows smoke in their direction.

EDDIE
What'cha want? Nobody round here's buying Amway.

LILI
(to Shari)
What's he talking about? I don't use Amway.

SHARI
Quiet, Sis!

The men break into laughter. Patron #1 slips around behind Shari. He struts as if he were a streetwalker. The men laugh and high-five like a band of Bowery buffoons.

SHARI
I'd like to ask some questions?

EDDIE
This ain't no school room, so beat it.

SHARI
I was only --

Eddie, now on his feet, gets right in Shari's face.

EDDIE
-- I said, beat it.

All Shari can smell are bad teeth and breath. She takes a few steps back.

SHARI

If I were selling Amway, I'd
certainly introduce you to our
tooth paste.

Lili wrinkles her nose.

LILI

Soap wouldn't hurt either.

EDDIE

(to Lili)

Shut up, piss puddle.

LILI

Did you hear him?

Eddie lunges at Shari. She sidesteps and gives a hammer
punch to his neck. She follows with an axe kick onto the
back of his leg. He stumbles forward.

SHARI

I'm not looking for trouble.

Eddie holds his neck; he grimaces with pain.

EDDIE

You little bitch! Trouble's what
you've got.

Patron #2 steps toward Shari and grabs for her shoulder. She
ducks away. He clenches a fist and throws a punch toward her
face. She spins and elbow punches him in the ribs.

Patron #3 plods toward Lili. She snatches up three billiard
balls. She throws one, and it hits him in the noggin. He
goes wobbly and falls.

Patron #4 moves on Shari. She grabs his arm and flips him
onto the floor. He's up again and waves her to come on. She
jumps into the air and sweeps him. He sprawls onto a table
and knocks over several chairs.

A black guy starts to get up from a table. Lili throws
another ball. It bounces off the table and strikes him on
the nose. He grabs his nose as blood gushes out and drips
onto the table.

Lili gently tosses and catches the remaining ball.

A tall slime ball swings wildly. Shari delivers a double
snap kick. He lurches into the side of the bar and slides
down onto the floor. A bottle of whiskey falls from the bar
and breaks over his head.

Shari pivots behind Eddie and snatches a cue stick from the rack. She places it firmly across his throat in a quick fluid motion.

SHARI
If you'll escort us, we'll be
leaving.

Lili tosses the remaining ball onto the pool table and hurries over beside Shari.

While Shari presses the stick to his throat, she eases Eddie toward the door. The men dispatched lie on the floor. She looks at them.

SHARI
(cheerfully)
Nice workout.

She backs Eddie to the door and gives him a gentle shove. She and Lili step outside.

EXT. STICKS POOL HALL - DAY

Once outside, they scamper to the car and get in.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY

Shari lingers long enough to check her makeup. Lili locks her door and looks at the building's entrance. As they pull away, Eddie hesitantly looks out the door.

INT. CHA GI MARTIAL ARTS STUDIO - DAY

Students work out on thick mats. Other students use punching bags and Wing Chun dummies. A class of children watches a demonstration by their instructors.

Shari stands on a mat with her instructor. TODD NGAI, 40, is a well-toned martial artist and friend. In his hand, he holds two bo staffs.

TODD
You've made outstanding progress
with taekwondo. I wanna' brush up
on the bo staff.

He flips a staff to Shari. She taps it into her hand.

SHARI
I'm ready.

TODD
Let's take the attack position.

They get into the attack stance.

LATER

TODD
Enough for this session.

He tosses Shari a towel.

SHARI
How long before I'll have it down?

Todd shakes his head.

TODD
You're such a perfectionist.

SHARI
Well, aren't you?

TODD
Got me there. Today you're off
your game. Something bothering
you?

Shari looks down at the bo staff still in her hand.

SHARI
I didn't know it showed. The case
I'm working is one of a kind.

TODD
How's that?

SHARI
We thought my parents' deaths were
an accident. New information
indicates it was murder.

TODD
Damn! That's serious. Let's sit
down.

Todd leads Shari over to a bench, and they sit.

TODD
How's the investigation going?

SHARI
Trying to wrap my brain around the
whole concept is difficult. I have
suspects out the wazoo.

Todd pats Shari on the forearm.

TODD
Anything I can do?

Shari smiles.

SHARI
I can't think of anything.

He forces a smiles and stands up.

TODD
In that case, hit the shower.

He pats her on the shoulder.

INT. CHINA FORTUNE RESTAURANT - DINNING ROOM - DAY

The Asian restaurant is elaborately decorated with red and gold color coordination. The restaurant is empty at this time of day.

A well-dressed man and a balding man sit at a table, sip wine, and talk MOS.

HOWARD CHONG has many vices; expensive clothes are one of them. In his middle sixties, his gray hair still shows traces of black. His dark eyes are piercing. Nothing gets in his way.

Shari enters and approaches the table where the men sit.

RAYMOND HSU, about thirty-five, stands by the table. His rust-colored sport jacket appears tight with his athletic build. His head is shaved, and a threatful look is on his face. He steps between her and the table.

RAYMOND
Mr. Chong's busy. Come back later.

Shari looks past Raymond and toward the table.

SHARI
I'm investigating the deaths of
Harry and Evelyn Chen.

RAYMOND
Should I throw her out, Boss?

CHONG
Raymond, remember, she's a guest.
(to Shari)
And you are miss?...

SHARI

Shari Chen.

Raymond allows her to approach the table. She hands Chong one of her business cards. He studies it and then looks at the back.

CHONG

A detective. Chen, same as the deceased.

SHARI

My parents. The story ran some years ago in the Sing Tao Daily.

Chong picks up a bottle of wine, adds to the balding man's glass, and then his own. He returns the bottle to the table.

CHONG

And I'm suppose to remember a story from years ago? The news is depressing, too violent.

SHARI

Didn't a Vincent Ho work for you?

CHONG

He may have, but then a lot of people have worked for me. I'm an important man.

SHARI

Mr. Chong, do you have selective memory?

RAYMOND

Mr. Chong says he don't know. We don't need some wacky broad tryin' ta dig up ancient history.

Raymond cracks his knuckles and rocks his weight from side to side. He's a cheetah ready to spring.

RAYMOND

Wanna slap the cuffs on me?

Grinning, he extends his arms.

CHONG

I'm sure that's the last thing on Miss Chen's mind.

Chong gives Raymond a slight nod.

RAYMOND

You're real cute for a detective.

He reaches out to touch her breasts. She incorporates a palm block. It pushes his hand away before contact.

RAYMOND

Oh c'mon. I just wanna see if you have what it takes.

Raymond grabs Shari by the arm and flings her against the wall. Shari recovers quickly and is ready. Raymond makes several moves, and she repeatedly spins or ducks away. He throws multiple punches but is unable to land any.

She executes a shin kick to his side and spins away. He staggers and drops to his knees. She uses an inner axe kick to the clavicle and lays him flat. He struggles to his feet.

Shari uses a low snap kick to the crotch, and he drops onto the floor with a groan.

SHARI

(to Raymond)

I just wanted to see if you have what it takes.

(to Chong)

I think he could benefit from reading Miss Manners.

Shari starts to walk toward the front door.

A cashier wipes the counter with glass cleaner.

CHONG

Miss Chen, may I offer you a fortune cookie?

She stops at the counter and reaches into a bowl. She takes one, breaks it open, and unfolds the paper.

SHARI

This is really for you.

(reading aloud)

"Danger comes from unexpected places."

She looks up. Her eyes meet Chong's.

SHARI

I'd remember that.

She tosses the paper onto the counter and leisurely walks out the door.

Chong still sits at the table. He lifts his wine glass, finishes the contents, and carefully pats his mouth with a linen napkin.

CHONG
(to balding man)
You'll excuse me.

The balding man nods.

CHONG
(to Raymond)
I have work for you.

Chong rises from the table as does the balding man. They shake hands. Chong heads toward his office. Raymond gets up from the floor and follows.

CHONG'S OFFICE

Chong and Raymond enter the office. Chong sits at his desk. Raymond sits in a high-backed, leather chair. A ceiling fan stirs the air.

Raymond displays a snarly look.

RAYMOND
Boss, I'm gonna kill that little
whore.

He extends his hands and shakes them as if chocking someone. Chong seems unimpressed.

CHONG
The guy I talked about earlier?

RAYMOND
Lim?

CHONG
Yeah. He could make things hot.

RAYMOND
What about Chen?

CHONG
Focus. Richie still serving time?

RAYMOND
Yea, at Mason Street.

CHONG
Lim's there. You know what needs
doin'.

INT. BEIJING CLUB - DAY

The interior decor is an Asian motif. Employees buff the floors, clean, and do general prep before it's time to open. At a far end of the room, a group of men sit and play cards.

A man sits at the end of the bar, drink in hand. He surveys the entire operation with keen interest.

Shari enters and slowly walks over.

SHARI

Mr. Wu, Stanley Wu?

STANLEY WU is a gangster with stylish manners. On the street, he may be mistaken for a bank executive. His tawdry tie gives him away. He's mid-forties. Morality is a word not found in his dictionary.

WU

I'm Wu. You here for the singer's job?

SHARI

I'm not here for a job.

WU

A shame. You have the looks.

SHARI

Thank you. My name is Shari Chen. May I ask a couple of questions?

He motions her to join him.

WU

Never let it be said I turned a lady away.

She sits on the stool next to him.

SHARI

Did you ever employ a man named Philip Ho?

WU

Yes, Ho did some work around here.

Wu finishes his drink. He points at the glass and the bartender refills it.

WU

Where is he? He in trouble? This is a respectable business, and I have to protect my good name.

SHARI

He's dead.

Wu tugs at his tie and then slides his hand down the front of his jacket.

WU

Oh!

SHARI

Anyone close to Ho, a girlfriend?

WU

He had two girlfriends.

SHARI

Know how I'd contact them?

Wu shakes his head.

WU

I barely knew them.

A little smile occupies the corner of his mouth.

SHARI

Did Ho carry a gun?

WU

Dead men, guns, where's this leading?

SHARI

It's leading to murder, and Ho was the murderer.

WU

Murder? Quite an accusation. I'm just trying to earn an honest buck. You a cop?

SHARI

Private detective.

She opens her purse, pulls out her business card, and hands it to Wu. He looks at the card. His demeanor changes.

WU

How about that? A private dick with a vagina. I always was a sucker for a pretty face. Most female cops look like guys with tit jobs.

He flips the card onto the bar.

WU

Interview's over.

SHARI

One more question?

WU

Sorry.

Wu turns his attention back to his drink. Peeved, she stares his way.

SHARI

(mockingly)

I appreciate your time. If you think of anything, call me.

WU

Yeah, sure.

She strides to the front door and exits.

Wu turns to the table of card players.

WU

(Cantonese; subtitled)

Paul, see what she's up to.

PAUL, 30s, looks over.

PAUL

(Cantonese; subtitled)

One thing I enjoy is following women.

Paul rises and hurries toward the door. He opens it a crack and peeks out. He opens it wider and leaves.

EXT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - DAY

Black metal grates on a brown sandstone building discourage intruders. On the wings of a breeze, bits of paper flutter down the street.

A man in coveralls gets down and attaches something to the undercarriage of Shari's car. Coveralls stands up and double times it down the street.

LATER

Shari walks out of the building and to her car. She slides the key into the lock. A sound like a hiss draws her attention. She looks down. The end of a cat's black tail protrudes from beneath the car.

SHARI

Get out from there.

She stoops and extends her hand underneath. She waves it to swish the cat away. The tail disappears from sight.

She gets down on all fours to investigate and looks under the car. Next to the black cat and attached to the car is a bomb. The cat hisses and runs away.

Shari stands and moves away. She turns and rushes back into the building.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - DAY

Nancy sits at her desk. Shari rushes in.

SHARI

Nancy, call nine-one-one! There's a bomb under my car!

She hurries toward Jimmy's office.

JIMMY'S OFFICE

Jimmy sits and goes through mail.

Shari flings open the door. It swings back, strikes the doorstep, and bounces off.

JIMMY

Shari, you look like you've seen a ghost.

SHARI

Not a ghost. A bomb!

Jimmy drops the mail onto the desk.

JIMMY

A bomb?

SHARI

Yes, and it's under my car.

Nancy hurries in.

NANCY

Bomb squad's on its way.

EXT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - DAY

Police cars block either end of the street. The bomb squad vehicle pulls up with a bomb containment trailer attached to its rear. Officers cordon off the area. A SERGEANT, 40s, and a disposal officer approach the car and examine the bomb.

The disposal officer uses a hand-portable, telescopic manipulator to move the bomb to the back of the trailer. The containment trailer's hydraulic arm lifts, rotates, and deposits the bomb inside the container. He closes the lid. The trailer is driven away.

Shari, Jimmy, and Nancy walk out front. Shari walks up to the Sergeant.

SHARI

My name is Shari Chen. My car had the bomb underneath.

SERGEANT

Miss Chen, you were fortunate. There was enough Semtex to take out several cars.

SHARI

And I always thought black cats were bad luck.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - DAY

Shari and Nancy examine some paperwork at Nancy's desk. Shari's cell phone rings, and she answers.

SHARI

Hello.... Alan, that is good news. Let me get something to write on.

Nancy hands her a pad. Shari picks up a pen from the desk.

SHARI

What did you learn?

INT. EVERYTHING COMPUTING - DAY

Alan sits at a work bench. Electronic parts are spread over the bench. Nearby, a soldering iron smokes.

ALAN

Howard Chong has a daughter Mei-Lien. Spent most of her life in Hong Kong. The Hong Kong police have nothing on her. She runs the Asian Wholesale Food Warehouse on Townsend Street.

SHARI (V.O.)

Good work. Tomorrow, I'll ask Jered Chong about her.

INT. SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT - DAY

It's a busy morning. Passengers walk swiftly toward their respective checkpoints. A small girl toddles along; she tows a bag twice her size. Shari hurries through the airport.

As Shari walks up to the kiosk, she pulls up the flight conformation on her iPhone. She enters the information into the kiosk and prints her boarding pass.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

A Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 takes off.

EXT. LAX AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

A Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 lands.

EXT. LAX AIRPORT - DAY

Shari sees a sign that reads: "RENTAL CAR SHUTTLE." She follows it and boards a bus.

INT. MASON STREET JAIL - DAY

Benny works in the electrical shop. The wall clock indicates it's time for lunch. The last of the inmates drifts out. Benny is alone. Three men enter and briskly walk toward him. Benny recognizes one of the men.

BENNY

Hey, Richie. What's up man?

RICHIE MARTINEZ, 30, is a muscular gangbanger and all around heartless bastard.

DOUG and GREG are a couple of twenty-something cons.

RICHIE

So, you can't keep your trap shut?

Benny is surprised then gets angry.

BENNY

That's a lie. I'm no squealer.

RICHIE

The hell you're not! Fuckstick,
the guy you fought should have
finished you off.

BENNY

Liar! I'll bust your head.

RICHIE

Yea?

Benny swings at Richie and misses. Richie clocks Benny. Benny staggers backward; his arms grab at the air like a swimmer in backstroke. He falls onto the floor.

RICHIE

You stepped in shit, and you'll
pay.

He turns and snatches a piece of electrical conduit off a bench and repeatedly slams it down on Benny's leg. Ritchie stomps on the leg. Crack! Benny screams and rolls from side to side. Greg tries to hold him.

RICHIE

Doug, help Greg.

Doug leaps over to help. Bone protrudes from a leg wound, which resembles Swiss steak. Blood flows from the wound. Benny continues to holler. They savage him with tools, parts, anything within their reach.

BENNY

No, you fu -- ugh.

Benny, flat on his back, continues to holler. Richie swings the conduit again and strikes Benny in the face. Blood and bits of broken teeth fly through the air like tiny missiles.

RICHIE

Gimme that wire.

Doug grabs a spool and flips it to Richie. With pliers, Richie snips off a length of wire and coils it around Benny's neck. Benny chokes. He's nearly unconscious.

Richie, Doug, and Greg drag Benny over beneath a breaker box. Richie connects the wire to the box and throws the switch. Benny gurgles and his body convulses as electricity courses through him.

GREG
He looks warm.

RICHIE
This'll cool him off.

Richie picks up a nearby bucket of water. He tosses the water and then the bucket onto Benny.

DOUG
I don't think he wants to play.

Benny lies motionless. The lifeblood slowly drains from his body. Richie reaches down and picks up a few pieces of shattered teeth.

RICHIE
Souvenirs.

He clenches the pieces in his fist.

DOUG
Like a hunter takin' teeth from his
kill.

RICHIE
Yea, I'm a big game hunter.

He pumps his clenched fist up and down above his head.

HALLWAY

Ritchie, Doug, and Greg saunter down the hallway. They give high-fives and slap each other on the back.

ELECTRICAL SHOP

Water pops and sizzles. Splatters of blood cover the floor, walls, and machinery. Water mixed with blood slowly drips down a nearby drain.

EXT. INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 15 - DAY

The traffic is heavy near the Victorville exit. A sign reads: "VICTORVILLE 1."

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

Shari steers her rental car into the right lane. She sees the off ramp just ahead.

EXT. RENTAL CAR - DAY

Shari turns and drives the car up the ramp.

Another sign reads: "AIR EXPRESSWAY BLVD." She turns and follows the signs to the prison.

EXT. FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

The prison is a multistory concrete complex located on a flat expanse. Nearby are the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas.

Shari pulls onto a lot, finds a space, and parks. She gets out and walks into the building.

INT. FEDERAL CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - DAY

The windows at the visitor center run from near the floor to the ceiling. A toddler sleeps in a stroller while skinny woman makes inquiries MOS to a RECEPTIONIST OFFICER, 30s, at a desk. A television has its volume turned too high.

Shari walks briskly up to the gray metal desk.

RECEPTIONIST OFFICER
Good afternoon. May I help you?

SHARI
I'm here to see Jered Chong.

She hands him her detective's license. He makes some notations in a log and hands it back.

RECEPTIONIST OFFICER
Have a seat.

Shari walks over and takes a seat. Other visitors enter. She pages through a magazine, gets up, and meanders over to a window. She looks out over the parking lot. She walks back and sits.

RECEPTIONIST OFFICER
Miss Chen.

SHARI
Yes?

RECEPTIONIST OFFICER
Here's your card.

She walks to the Receptionist Officer, and he hands her a blue card.

RECEPTIONIST OFFICER
Through that door.

He points to a door across the room.

SHARI
Thank you.

Shari approaches the metal door. The sign over the door reads: "VISITOR ROOM, AUTHORIZED PERSONS ONLY." She opens it and enters.

HALLWAY

There's a single door at the end. She walks slowly to the door, opens it, and steps through.

VISITOR ROOM

The room has rows of numbered booths. Each booth has a metal chair. At the front of each booth is a narrow counter and glass partition. Overhead, rows of fluorescent tubes brighten a room that is otherwise depressing.

Shari enters the visitor room. A PRISON GUARD, 40s, who sits behind a desk greets her.

PRISON GUARD
Good afternoon, ma'am. Your card.

She hands him the visitor card. He glances at it.

PRISON GUARD
Booth number six.

The officer points to a row of booths.

She walks past booths where inmates and visitors engage in indistinct chatter. She reaches booth number six. Nobody is there, so she sits.

JERED CHONG, 44, appears gaunt as he shuffles toward her. The orange jumpsuit is not the Armani he favors. He looks like an old hophead or drunk fresh off a binge. He's a man who neglects his razor.

She stares at him through the wire meshed glass.

JERED
You here for me?

SHARI

I am if you're Jered Chong.

He sits down.

JERED

I'm Jered. What's your game?

SHARI

I'm Shari Chen. I'd like to ask a few questions about the deaths of Harry and Evelyn Chen.

Jered squirms uncomfortably in his chair.

JERED

Who are they? Case you haven't noticed, I'm in prison and have been for eighteen years.

SHARI

When did your sister visit last?

JERED

Mei-Lien?

SHARI

Yes.

JERED

She's nothing to me, a phantom.

Wary, she hesitates.

JERED

Well?

SHARI

You're dirty. You and members of your family planned my parents' murders.

JERED

I'm clean. You can't touch me.

SHARI

After you got caught in that bad deal, daddy left you hang out to dry.

Shari leans forward in her chair to mock him.

SHARI

He's living the good life while you
sit and shrivel away. He has money
and women while you count
cockroaches running up and down
your wall.

Jered looks incensed.

SHARI

You look old, dirty, and tired.
Prison hasn't been kind.

Jered jumps to his feet and bangs both fists on the glass
partition. There's fire in his eyes. He leans on the glass.

JERED

You filthy little cunt! If I were
out there I'd --

Other visitors peek from their booths.

SHARI

You'd what, kill me? Is that what
you'd do, kill me? You're too dumb
to know you're a patsy.

JERED

Bitch, you don't know shit about
me! You know nothing, absolutely
nothing!

Saliva ejects from Jered's mouth and splashes onto the glass
partition. He breathes hard and fast like a sprinter after a
two-hundred-meter dash.

SHARI

Why so defensive? Poor potty
training?

She gets up and steps out of the booth. She turns. A slow
grin spreads across her face.

Jered still leans against the glass, face red, and contorted
into a grotesque sneer.

SHARI

Don't tell me you weren't potty
trained.

She gets a pouty look, shakes her head, and grins.

SHARI

Since you'll be here awhile longer,
maybe Martha Stewart can measure
your window for drapes.

He slumps into his chair.

INT. CHONG'S OFFICE - DAY

Chong and Raymond sit in the office. Raymond cleans under
his nails with a switchblade.

CHONG

Raymond, I know your affection for
Miss Chen, but it's time she joined
her parents.

RAYMOND

I'll put a couple of men on her,
Boss.

CHONG

No fuckups. I don't like loose
ends.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT RUNWAY - DAY

A Southwest Airlines Boeing 737 lands.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - DAY

When she enters, Shari looks weary.

NANCY

Hi, Shari. Your uncle's waiting
for you.

JIMMY'S OFFICE

Shari shuffles in. Jimmy, with a look of concern, motions
her to sit. She sits and drops her purse onto the floor.

JIMMY

Glad you're here. Lim's been
murdered.

SHARI

What happened?

JIMMY

The best information available --

LATER

JIMMY

The coroner is going over the body.
They'll call with the results.

SHARI

Lim may have held something back.

JIMMY

Any ideas?

SHARI

I'll find some new angle. Want my
report on Jered?

JIMMY

Only if it's good. I've had enough
bad.

SHARI

In that case, I'll be in my office.

Shari grabs hold of the purse, gets up, and walks out.

CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY

Nancy files papers as Shari enters.

SHARI

Any messages?

NANCY

Yes, here.

She heads to her desk with Shari behind. She hands Shari
several messages.

NANCY

Like some tea?

SHARI

Please.

Shari walks toward her office as she peruses the messages.
She opens the door and disappears inside.

SHARI'S OFFICE

Her office is a celebration of the history of the Chen
Agency. There are all kinds of memorabilia from past cases.

She steps to her desk and places her purse on the corner.
She sits and starts to read the messages.

Nancy enters with a cup of tea.

NANCY
Guess you're tired.

Lili pops in.

LILI
I see our star detective's back.
Turn up anything?

She settles into a chair next to the desk.

SHARI
Other than Jered's temperature,
nothing.

LILI
What happened?

SHARI
I baited him like a fish. When I
reeled him in, he came right out of
the water. That man has anger
issues. I ruined his entire day.

Shari stands and picks up her purse.

SHARI
My car's running rough. I'll drop
it at the dealer.

LILI
I'll follow you.

SHARI
Good idea.

They walk out of the office.

INT. CHONG'S OFFICE - DAY

Howard Chong's cell phone rings; he answers. He sits down on
the corner of his desk.

CHONG
Hello. Oh, it's you.

While he listens, he shakes a cigarette from a pack on the
desk and lights it with his gold Ronson. Chong is agitated.

CHONG

Whad'ya want from me? I'm doing
the best I can. I do have men on
it!

Chong slams the phone down onto the table. It breaks.
Pieces scatter across the desk pad.

He walks to a cabinet and returns to the desk with a glass
and bottle of liquor. He pours a drink, gulps it down, and
pours another.

He sips the second drink. His face fills with anger. He
flings the glass against the wall. It shatters.

INT. FORD DEALERSHIP - DAY

In the spacious service department, service writers attend to
customers. The noise of pneumatic tools fills the bowels of
the shop.

Shari pulls her car into the service lane, turns off the
engine, and gets out. A SERVICE WRITER, 30s, looks over the
car as he walks in her direction.

SERVICE WRITER

Good afternoon. May I help you?

SHARI

My car's running rough.

The Service Writer turns and quickly walks to a service desk.
She follows.

SERVICE WRITER

See you purchased it here. What's
the phone number?

SHARI

Five-five-five... one-two-five-
five.

He enters the number.

SERVICE WRITER

Here we are. Will you need a
rental car, Miss Chen?

SHARI

Yes.

INT. BEIJING CLUB - DAY

Stanley Wu sits at a table with two of his men.

WU

Chen's using the murder investigation as a smoke screen. She's helping City Hall. I'm too smart. I'll crush them. What I want you to do --

EXT. SHARI'S APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

The red-brick building is one of many located on this quiet street. On the lawn, wooden benches are shaded by the broad leaves of poplar trees.

Two men sit in a black Crown Victoria and watch Shari's building. FAT MAN, 40s, is short and rotund. THIN MAN, 30s, is taller and slim.

Shari briskly walks out of the building and gets into the rental car. She pulls out. The Crown Vic eases away from the curb and into traffic.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

Three youngsters ride bikes in tandem. Shari drives through a residential neighborhood. The Crown Vic moves into position several cars behind.

INT. CROWN VICTORIA - DAY - TRAVELING

Fat Man leans forward. He stretches to keep his eyes on Shari's rental.

FAT MAN

Don't drop back too far.

THIN MAN

If I stay close, she'll spot us.

FAT MAN

Mr. Wu wants this done right.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

Shari looks into her rear-view mirror.

SHARI (V.O.)

Company.

She speeds up, changes lanes, and at the next light turns.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

Parked cars line the street. Pedestrians jaywalk rather than wait for the lights.

Behind Shari, the Crown Vic makes the turn and slides sideways. Thin Man maintains control and is right behind.

She speeds along commercial streets. Thin Man accelerates and bumps into the rear of her car. He backs off and does it again.

A pedestrian dashes in front of Shari; she narrowly misses him as he stumbles to the curb.

Thin Man cranks up the horses until the Vic is alongside. The Crown Vic drifts over and bumps into the rental. Shari tries to hold the wheel, but she bounces off a parked car. Sparks fly.

In the right lane is a transit bus. Shari is in the middle lane, and the Crown Vic in the left lane.

They get alongside of the bus. The Crown Vic forces her car to the right. It sandwiches her against the bus. Passengers on the bus look down with astonishment. The body of the rental car begins to crumple. A window shatters.

The bus slows while the two cars continue on.

A taxi starts to pull out, and Shari hits the front fender. The impact sends pieces of plastic grill into the air. Some pieces strike her windshield and bounce away.

INT. CROWN VICTORIA - DAY - TRAVELING

The Fat Man shoots, laughs, and reloads his revolver.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - DAY

Shari executes a sharp turn, and the rental flips onto its side. It spins around and slides backward. It throws sparks, like metal on a grinding wheel.

INT. RENTAL CAR - DAY - TRAVELING

Shari sees the asphalt pavement. It flashes past, inches from her face.

SHARI

Oh, my God!

EXT. EXCAVATION SITE - DAY

Construction equipment and barriers surround a gaping hole in the street. Piles of dirt and debris cover the block.

The car comes to rest near a group of construction workers.

The car teeters on the edge of the hole. Pieces of the pavement break away and plunge to the bottom. Shari pokes her head through the shattered front-side passenger window.

Police cars arrive with their obligatory lights and sirens. Officers hop out; some begin crowd control.

Shari climbs through the opening and stands on the door. She hops down.

An OLDER OFFICER rushes over.

OLDER OFFICER
You okay, lady?

She brushes herself off.

SHARI
I think so.

She stands motionless and looks at the car.

OLDER OFFICER
You're lucky.

SHARI
I sure am. That's a rental.

Its sirens blare as an ambulance speeds onto the scene. Two paramedics exit the vehicle. The SKINNY PARAMEDIC, 20s, hurries up to the Older Officer.

SKINNY PARAMEDIC
Anyone hurt?

OLDER OFFICER
This lady was driving. Says she's okay.

SKINNY PARAMEDIC
You should be thoroughly checked.

SHARI
I'm fine. I'll have my sister pick me up.

LATER

Lili pulls up in her Volkswagen Golf. She gets out and runs over to her sister and the Older Officer.

OLDER OFFICER
Miss Chen, we have everything for our report.

SHARI
Thank you, Officer.

LILI
When you called, I couldn't believe it.

SHARI
Look at that rental. Take me to the dealer. I'll con them out of another car.

LILI
Oh, brother.

INT. FORD DEALERSHIP - DAY

Shari, Lili, the SERVICE MANAGER, 30s, and STORE MANAGER, 50s, stand in the service department.

SERVICE MANAGER
I told her she couldn't have another car.

STORE MANAGER
That's right. I can't give you another car until you return the first one. Where is it?

A tow truck rolls up with the rental car on its flatbed. The truck stops. The rental's hood slides off and drops onto the pavement. Crash!

SHARI
There it is.

A clipboard in the Service Manager's hand slips and falls onto the concrete floor.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN GULF - DAY - TRAVELING

Lili drives. Shari is in the passenger seat.

LILI
We tried.

SHARI
Did you see the look on the Service Manager when I asked for another car?

LILI

Yes, and did you see the look on the Store Manager when the tow truck arrived?

They chortle.

INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

An apartment decorated with contemporary furniture and Asian flavored accessories.

Shari and Lili enter. Shari drops her purse onto a table. They go into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

The room is small with little space for a table. Bright stainless-steel appliances are the order of the day. Natural wood cabinets warm the room.

Shari checks the refrigerator and cabinets.

SHARI

How about a salad?

LILI

Okay. Remember, no onion.

Shari takes vegetables from the refrigerator and places them beside the sink. She begins to wash them.

Lili opens a cabinet, gathers plates, and gets silverware from a drawer. She carries them to the dining area.

DINING AREA

Lili arranges the plates and silverware on the table. She disappears back into the kitchen and returns with napkins, croutons, and bacon bits.

LILI

I'm starved.

SHARI

You usually are.

She places them on the table.

LIVING ROOM

Lili walks in and looks around.

LILI
Where's the remote?

She spots it in the corner of the sofa and picks it up.

LILI
Never mind.

She sits on the sofa, turns on the TV, and channel surfs. A Jackie Chan movie flickers on the screen.

INTERCUT - CONVERSATION

LILI
Oh, a Jackie Chan movie.

SHARI
Jackie Chan sure makes martial arts
look easy.

She continues to chop the vegetables.

LILI
I'll say. He's a lot better than
you.

A little smile curls in the corner of Shari's mouth.

SHARI
I don't have a choreographer. What
would you like to drink?

She removes bottles of salad dressing from the refrigerator.

LILI
Diet Pepsi, lots of ice.

A moment later, there are the sounds of an ice dispenser and then ice as it tumbles into a glass.

SHARI
Okay, let's eat.

DINING AREA

Shari carries in a tray with their salads, dressing, and drinks. She sets the tray onto the table. Lili enters from the living room and sits down.

Shari sets one salad in front of Lili and the other at the remaining place. She drops into her chair.

SHARI
What a day.

They begin to eat.

LILI
What's our next move?

SHARI
Clues are out there but where?

Lili displays a puzzled look.

LILI
Not like an old B movie where the
clues fall right into their laps.

SHARI
Yeah!

Lili pours dressing onto her salad. She picks up the
croutons and pauses.

LILI
So, what you're saying is we're
clueless.

SHARI
We may not be as you put it,
"clueless." Ho said the
perpetrators were on tape planning
the murders. We have to find it.

Lili's brows draw together.

LILI
That was ages ago. If the tape
exists, it could be anywhere.

SHARI
Sis, that's true, but we have to
assume it exists.

Bewilderment etches Lili's face.

LILI
Where do we start?

Shari adds more dressing to her salad.

SHARI
If a tape exists, who would have
it, Chong? No, he would have
destroyed it.

LILI
Jered?

SHARI
Jail leaves him out.

LILI
Mei-Lien?

SHARI
Too late on the scene.

LILI
That thug Raymond?

SHARI
A good bet.

LILI
Are we forgetting Weinstock and Wu?

SHARI
No, here's what we'll do.

As Shari speaks MOS, Lili hangs on very word.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN GOLF - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Lili drives, and Shari is the passenger.

SHARI
At least, no one will recognize us
in your car.

The whine of a motorcycle engine breaks the near silence.
Lili looks out. Cyclist #1 on a yellow Kawasaki motorcycle
points a machine pistol.

LILI
Think again.

She increases speed, but the motorcycle pulls up alongside.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - NIGHT

The bratatat of an automatic weapon; bullets break a side
window and rip into the body.

A blue Kawasaki motorcycle falls in several yards behind the
yellow one.

Shari's Walther PK380 extends through the window. She fires.
Bullets ricochet off the pavement near the yellow motorcycle.
Another glances off a metal light pole.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN GOLF - NIGHT - TRAVELING

SHARI

Cut him off!

Lili cuts her wheel and changes lanes.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - NIGHT

The Golf forces the yellow motorcycle to the curb. The motorcycle jumps the curb and onto the sidewalk. Cyclist #1 shifts gears.

Cyclist #1 does not see a section of the sidewalk torn out for repair. The bike hits the hole. Cyclist #1 is thrown over the handlebar and airborne.

With a thud, he strikes the side of a tree and is impaled on a broken branch. The bike slides along the ground, flips, churns up hunks of sod, and plows into the tree and cyclist #1. Blood drips onto the ground.

The blue motorcycle moves up and then drops back. Cyclist #2 gives a burst from an CZ75 machine pistol. Lead tears into the rear body of the Golf. The Golf approaches an intersection.

A red and white panel truck enters the intersection. Lili swerves and passes in front. She's so close another coat of paint would mean contact. The motorcycle slows and passes behind the truck.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN GOLF - NIGHT - TRAVELING

The Golf spins one hundred eighty degrees and faces the motorcycle. The motorcycle closes on them. Lili accidentally drops the Golf into reverse and hits the gas. The car goes down the street backward.

SHARI

I didn't know you could do that.

LILI

Neither did I.

EXT. VOLKSWAGEN GOLF - NIGHT

The Golf spins one hundred eighty degrees.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN GOLF - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Lili's face displays enough fear to make the Grim Reaper smile. She finds first gear and takes off.

LILI
Which way?

SHARI
Just go!

Shari continues to return fire. Lili turns down an alley.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO ALLEY - NIGHT

The motorcycle follows.

Lili slams on the brakes. The Golf slides, but she maintains control. The motorcycle cuts around the Golf. From an adjacent alley, a garbage truck backs up. Cyclist #2 hits the brakes.

The bike falls onto its side and scrapes along the pavement. As cyclist #2 hangs on, it slides under the rear of the garbage truck. Cyclist #2 cries out. The massive wheels roll over him and the bike. Scrunch!

INT. VOLKSWAGEN GOLF - NIGHT - TRAVELING

SHARI
Somebody has it in for us.

LILI
No, for you.

They speed to the end of the alley and turn onto a street.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - NIGHT

The car moves along a residential street with older apartments. A young couple pressed against the side of a building makes out. A cat jumps onto a dumpster.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN GOLF - NIGHT - TRAVELING

SHARI
There's the building.

LILI
I thought we'd never get here.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREET - NIGHT

Shari and Lili get out of the car and examine the damage. The passenger side has several bullet holes. Lili pokes a finger into one of the holes.

The side windows are all shattered. Web like pieces of glass cling to the openings of some.

TEEN BOY #1 and TEEN BOY #2 walk casually past.

TEEN BOY #1
Hey, are those holes real?

TEEN BOY #2
Nah, too many.

Lili and Shari ignore them.

LILI
It could have been worse.

SHARI
Sorry about the damage, Sis.

They walk toward the apartment building. Lili puts her arm around her sister's waist. A dog barks not far away.

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

The lobby is dimly lighted. Fresh paint would be nice. A large potted plant stands beside the elevator door.

Shari and Lili walk toward the elevator. A teenage girl and a blond woman exit the elevator and walk past.

10TH FLOOR HALLWAY

Shari and Lili step out of the elevator into an empty hallway. In need of replacement, the carpet is worn and faded. They look for the apartment number.

SHARI
There's the apartment. Ring the bell.

LILI
Why me?

SHARI
I can't do it; he knows me. If you ring and he answers, say you have the wrong apartment. I'll wait around the corner.

Lili walks hesitantly to the door and rings the bell. There's no answer. She knocks, no answer.

Shari comes to the door and removes lock pick tools from her shoulder bag. She sets the bag onto the floor.

She works the tools into the lock, and after some deft moves, she turns the knob and the door swings open.

They look into the darkness of the apartment. Shari snatches her bag from the floor.

INT. RAYMOND'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Shari switches on the light, and they enter. Lili gently closes the door.

The apartment is decorated with contemporary furniture, colors not well-coordinated. Several newspapers are on the living room floor, and empty glasses sit on an end table.

LILI

Looks like he buys furniture on sale.

SHARI

Let's start here.

They examine the furniture in the living room and dining area. They reach under some pieces and peer under others. Lili pays particular attention pictures and plaques. She lifts them away from the wall and peeks behind.

INT. MERCURY MARQUIS - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Raymond drives while a woman sits in the passenger seat. The stereo plays soft music.

JIAO, 30, is sexy and curvaceous. The kind of gal who can make a man forget he's married.

RAYMOND

Jiao, you had me in every damn dress shop in town. My feet hurt.... Hell, everything hurts.

JIAO

Got what I wanted. A lady likes to look good for her man.

Raymond pulls his car onto the apartment lot and parks.

He pecks Jiao on the cheek.

RAYMOND

Glad this day's over.

INT. RAYMOND'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Shari and Lili stand beside a closet.

LILI

We've covered everything except
this closet and the bedroom.

INT. APARTMENT BLDG - NIGHT

Raymond holds the door as they enter the lobby. They walk hand in hand to the elevator. The sway of her tight buttocks sends an invitation.

10TH FLOOR HALLWAY

Raymond and Jiao exit the elevator and walk casually toward Raymond's apartment.

INT. RAYMOND'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Shari and Lili hear muffled voices outside the living room door. Someone unlocks the door. The knob turns.

Lili flips off the light before they duck into the bedroom and close the door. The apartment door opens; Raymond and Jiao enter.

RAYMOND

Let me sit a minute. Then I'll fix
drinks.

With his feet, Raymond pushes newspapers out of the way, flops down on the sofa, and loosens his tie. Jiao hurries behind the sofa. She begins to rub his neck and shoulders.

RAYMOND

Right there baby. Feels great.

He signs while she continues to rub.

RAYMOND

Ya ready for that drink? Scotch?

JIAO

Yes, neat.

He gets up, and they stroll into the kitchen.

KITCHEN

Raymond opens a cabinet and removes a bottle of scotch. From another cabinet, he gets two glasses.

BEDROOM

Shari and Lili are trapped in the bedroom. They begin to whisper and walk about the room.

LILI
What'll we do?

Shari returns to the door, opens it a crack, and peers out. The living room is empty.

SHARI
We can slip out the front door.

LILI
Sure, and get shot.

Shari goes to the bedroom window and looks out. It's an old building with a ledge. A fire escape is a few yards away. She tries to open the window, but it's jammed.

SHARI
Stuck.

LILI
Let me.

Lili tries but to no avail. They tug upward. The window yields slightly. Again, they pull; it moves more. With fingers under the sash, they lift, and the window opens with a loud squeak.

KITCHEN

Raymond looks about the room.

RAYMOND
You hear something?

He walks to the door and looks into the living room.

JIAO
I didn't hear anything. Pay attention to me. Isn't that why we're here?

She extends her hand.

RAYMOND
Baby, whatever you say.

He walks back and takes her hand.

Jiao presses against him. Her hand caresses his neck. Raymond's hand slides downward across her buttocks to rest on her thigh. She wiggles with contentment.

JIAO
(whispers)
That's better.

Jiao's wet lips part alluringly, and her tongue traces her upper lip.

BEDROOM

SHARI
I'll watch; you search.

Shari cracks the door and looks again. She can hear their muffled voices in the kitchen.

SHARI
Don't forget the bed.

Lili begins to search the bedding and practically pushes the mattress onto the floor.

KITCHEN

JIAO
Let's go to the sofa.

RAYMOND
I'll freshen these.

He unscrews the top off the scotch and adds more to each glass. He hands her glass back and raises his own.

She raises her glass.

RAYMOND
A toast to us.

They sip their drinks.

LIVING ROOM

They come back to the living room. Jiao leads the way. She sits down and pats the sofa cushion.

JIAO
Sit here. Show how much you missed me.

He sits next to her. She leans back in his arms.

He gives her a passionate kiss. He runs his hand across her breast and pauses over the nipple. He grins.

His passion grows; her hand rubs his crotch. Their mouths join, each tries to devour the other.

BEDROOM

Shari glances through the tiny opening in the door.

SHARI
Hurry up. They'll be here next.

LILI
Keep your pants on.

SHARI
I'm worried about his pants.

Lili continues to search.

LILI
There's nothing.

SHARI
Nothing?

Shari looks about the room.

SHARI
Check that radiator.

Lili steps over to the radiator. She looks and reaches to feel behind it.

LILI
I feel something.

Lili produces a micro cassette covered with duck tape. She tosses it to Shari.

SHARI
Sis, let's go.

Shari tucks it into her bag and slips the bag onto her shoulder. She turns her attention back to the window.

EXT. APARTMENT BLDG - NIGHT

Shari slides across the sill and cautiously stands on the ledge. She eyes the alley below.

Lili leans out the window.

LILI

This is where the ledge breaks away, and they almost fall.

SHARI

Some pieces are broken.

Lili looks down the side of the building floor by floor.

LILI

That's supposed to make me feel better?

SHARI

Whatever. I'm not sure we can reach the fire escape. We're six or seven feet away.

LILI

It looks like ten stories to me.

SHARI

We can't go back.

Shari looks at the ledge and then back at the fire escape.

SHARI

Come out, and close the window.

Lili sits on the sill, climbs out, and stands. With one hand, she closes the window.

Shari inches along with her back to the wall, arms out from her sides. Her fingers squeeze at the brick facing.

Not far behind, Lili slides her feet along the concrete ledge. There's a bleak look on her face.

LILI

Aerodynamically, I'm not built for more than this.

Shari positions herself, jumps, and grabs onto the steel landing. She looks up and sees a web attached to the rail. A huge spider with legs like long thin fingers hangs on.

SHARI

There's a gigantic spider.

LILI

Ask it to help you.

SHARI

Ha! Ha! You know my fear of bugs.

As she hangs from the landing, Shari slides her hands along an inch at a time. She moves herself away from the spider. She reaches up, grips the railing, and pulls herself over.

She breathes a sigh of relief.

SHARI

Your turn.

LILI

I can't. I'll fall.

SHARI

Don't be a baby.

LILI

I think I'm being quite practical.

Shari looks around.

SHARI

I'll look for something.

She ascends the ladder.

SHARI

The fire escape's loose.

LILI

You're just full of encouragement.

Shari disappears onto the roof. A moment later, she reappears. As she descends the ladder, she carries a length of rope. She ties one end to the fire escape.

SHARI

Here, grab the end. Swing over.

She tosses the other end to Lili.

LILI

I still don't think it's a good idea.

Lili swings out on the rope but is too far from Shari's reach. She twists on the rope unable to touch Shari's outstretched hand.

Bolts that hold the fire escape start to pull from the wall. The fire escape creaks and bows out over the alley.

The fire escape breaks completely loose and crashes against the building across the alley.

It slides along the wall and comes to rest against the other building's fire escape. Lili holds on; she sways back and forth.

Lili wraps her leg around the ladder of the other fire escape. She pulls herself over, grabs the rail with one hand, and lets go of the rope. She climbs the ladder and joins her sister on the landing.

SHARI
That was close.

LILI
Close doesn't describe it.

An ELDERLY WOMAN and several other residents hear the noise, open windows, and look out.

ELDERLY WOMAN
(with southern draw)
What's all that ruckus?

Lili smiles broadly.

LILI
Fire inspectors. Night shift.

Shari and Lili beat a hasty retreat down the ladder.

INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Shari and Lili sit on the sofa. Shari slips the cassette into a handheld player and presses play. Nothing happens.

SHARI
What the heck?

She turns it off and on again. Nothing happens.

LILI
The batteries?

SHARI
They're good.

She opens it, and removes the cassette. She examines it.

SHARI
The plastic's warped. We'd better get it to Dawson.

INT. POLICE CRIME LAB - DAY

Technicians move about the lab performing various tests. A centrifuge spins samples. In a glass-enclosed area, a male tech looks into an electron microscope.

Shari, Lili, and Dawson stand beside a lab bench.

A FEMALE TECH, 30s, sits at the bench. She uses tweezers to pull a length of tape from the cassette. She places it under a stereo microscope and examines it.

SHARI

Well?

FEMALE TECH

Heat's damaged the structure. It's useless.

Shari and Dawson swap disappointed glances. Lili has a deflated look.

LILI

I almost got killed for that.

INT. OFFICE CHIEF OF POLICE - DAY

Several men are in the office; among them is Detective Dawson. Chief O'Halleron sits at his desk. His demeanor is one of anger. A baseball bat lies on the desk.

SUPER: "THREE DAYS LATER."

O'HALLERON

Maxwell, what was the thinking that put Lim in Mason Street?

MAXWELL, middle-aged, dressed in civvies, is sheriff.

MAXWELL

There was no indication of danger.

O'Halleron gets up, takes the bat, and walks to the window. With one hand, he pulls down the slats of the Venetian blind and looks out over the city.

O'HALLERON

The press is calling for heads. They think someone set Lim up.

As he turns, O'Halleron lets go of the slats, and the pieces snap back into place. He looks at Maxwell.

O'HALLERON
 (to Maxwell)
 You're the sheriff. What do you
 propose... if anything?

With a handkerchief, Maxwell mops small droplets of perspiration from his forehead and lip.

MAXWELL
 We're interviewing everyone who
 came into contact with him.
 Somebody knows something.

O'HALLERON
 Obviously!

O'Halleron stalks around the room. The bat swings to-and-fro between his finger tips. He stops several feet from Dawson. His eyes move about.

O'HALLERON
 Dawson, whad'ya got?

DAWSON
 Chief, our focus is on the Chen
 case. The damaged tape was a
 disappointment.

O'HALLERON
 Yes, of course. Keep at it.

O'Halleron wheels to face another officer. SIMMONS, 41, has the appearance of a tough cop. He's assigned to the Internal Affairs Division.

O'HALLERON
 Simmons, I want I.A. looking for
 dirty cops.

SIMMONS
 I'll get on it.

O'HALLERON
 You're all be pounding a beat if
 things don't quickly change.

He swings the bat at a nearby chair and snaps off its leg. The men look at each other.

INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Shari sits at a vanity table. Her parents' picture sits to one side. The phone on her nightstand rings. She gets up, walks over, and answers.

SHARI

Hello.... Phil, it's been a long time. How are you? How are things at the university?

INT. LARKIN APARTMENT - OFFICE - NIGHT

Along the walls are bookcases crammed with anthropology books. A statue of the Neanderthal man rests on a pedestal near the desk.

PHIL LARKIN, 33, handsome, tanned, is a professor of anthropology at the university.

PHIL

I've been looking for an excuse to call.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SHARI

Phil, you don't need an excuse.

PHIL

I was given tickets to a performance of classical Chinese dance and music. It's at the War Memorial Opera House. Thought you might like to go tomorrow evening.

A look of glee covers her face.

SHARI

I'd love to go.

PHIL

The performance starts at seven. Pick you up about five thirty.

SHARI

Is it formal?

PHIL

No, but formal would be fun. You have something formal?

SHARI

I have just the thing.

PHIL

Afterward, we'll go for a late dinner.

SHARI
Sounds ideal.

PHIL
It's late. I won't keep you. Good
night.

SHARI
Good night.

Shari hangs up the phone. She pauses, picks it up once more,
and enters a number.

INT. LILI'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The furniture is white Arts and Crafts. The curtains and
bedspread are pale green and white.

Lili lies prone across the bed. She reads a chemistry book.
The phone rings, and she reaches to the nightstand and picks
it up.

LILI
Hello.

SHARI (V.O.)
Guess who's going to a show at the
War Memorial Opera House?

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

LILI
It must be you or you wouldn't be
calling at this time of night.

SHARI
Do you remember Phil Larkin from
the university?

LILI
Sure, the good-looking one with the
B-M-W.

SHARI
Do I hear a bit of jealousy?

Lili sits up on the bed.

LILI
Me, jealous? Men fall all over me.
Seriously, what are you wearing?

SHARI

The red dress I bought last September. You know how good I look in red. I'll wear it along with my red heels and gold satin purse.

LILI

You can finish the look with your gold earrings and necklace.

SHARI

I'll let you know how it goes.

LILI

Gotta go. There's a chemistry quiz in the morning.

SHARI

Good night.

Shari disconnects and places the phone on the vanity.

INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Shari wears a red spaghetti strap gown cut low to the middle of the back. Red heels, gold earrings, and a gold necklace finish her look. She walks down the hallway between the living room and bedroom. The doorbell rings.

LIVING ROOM

She moves gracefully to the front door, looks through the peephole, and opens it.

Phil, decked out in a black tuxedo, strolls in. When he looks at her, his eyes pop. His grin broadens.

PHIL

A million dollars doesn't describe your look.

A little giggle slips past her lips.

SHARI

Thank you. In that tux, you're an impressive figure yourself.

PHIL

Thanks. Are you ready?

SHARI

Yes.

She goes to the table and picks up her gold purse and red gloves. She glances at herself in the mirror.

Phil opens the door, offers her his arm, and they stride out.

INT. WAR MEMORIAL OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

The foyer is marble. The ceilings are vaulted and coffered. The last of the attendees make their way through the spacious historic building.

Shari and Phil walk at a brisk pace.

SHARI

This is beautiful.

PHIL

It was built in nineteen thirty-two. They don't build like this anymore.

They approach an USHER, 20s. Phil hands him their tickets.

USHER

This way.

As he leads them to their seats, the lights dim. The conductor raises his hands, and the performance begins.

INT. BMW - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Phil drives, and Shari looks out the window.

SHARI

The Shen Yun show was marvelous.
The music and dance exceptional.

PHIL

I was impressed with the colorful costumes.

In the side mirror, Shari watches a car.

SHARI

Someone's been following us.

Phil looks over his shoulder and glances through the window.

PHIL

There are hundreds of similar cars.

SHARI

But they aren't following us.

She turns in her seat for a better look.

PHIL
Maybe you're being paranoid after
everything that's happened.

SHARI
Guess you're right.

She turns to face forward.

EXT. DON VITO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The building is a single story with striped green, white, and red awnings. Thick bushes line the front. Steps lead to the landing at the front door.

INT. BMW - NIGHT - TRAVELING

Phil turns his car into the parking lot. In the rear-view mirror, the other car continues down the street. Phil spots a place near the entrance.

PHIL
See, I was right. Nothing to worry
about.

SHARI
I guess so.

He steers the car into the parking place.

EXT. DON VITO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

They get out of the BMW and walk into the restaurant.

INT. DON VITO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The tables are covered with crisp white tablecloths. Burgundy candled centerpieces adorn each table. Scenes of the Italian countryside are painted on the walls.

A HOSTESS, 30s, who wears a black dress greets them.

HOSTESS
(with Italian accent)
Good evening! Welcome to Don
Vito's. Dinner for two?

PHIL
Yes.

HOSTESS
This way, please.

She leads them to a table.

 HOSTESS
How's this?

 PHIL
Just fine.

Phil seats Shari and then sits across from her. The hostess hands each of them a menu.

 HOSTESS
The waiter will be with you.

She walks away.

 PHIL
Care for some wine?

 SHARI
I'd love some.

 PHIL
I know just the one. Waiter!

A WAITER, 40s, comes to their table.

 PHIL
Do you stock Gaja Barolo Sperss?

 WAITER
Yes, an excellent wine.

 PHIL
A bottle, please.

 WAITER
Right away, sir.

The Waiter hastily walks off. Shari peruses the menu; Phil does the same.

 PHIL
Anything stand out, or may I
recommend something?

EXT. DON VITO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A black Mercury Marquis rolls up to the curb near the restaurant parking lot.

INT. MERCURY MARQUIS - NIGHT

In the car are Raymond Hsu and three young Chinese gunmen. TOMMY, CHIN, and DONG earn their keep through the barrel of a gun. Raymond hands Chin and Dong Norinco Type 56 assault rifles and Tommy a H&K MP5.

RAYMOND
(Cantonese; subtitled)
Tonight, Chen's luck runs out.

Raymond points as he speaks.

RAYMOND
Tommy, in those bushes. Chin,
behind the cars, far end. Dong, in
the middle.

EXT. DON VITO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The three gunmen leave the car and take up their positions.

INT. DON VITO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Shari and Phil eat and chat.

SHARI
How are your parents?

PHIL
They're in Rio. Dad's been so
busy. He needed to get away. Rio
was Mom's idea.

Phil picks up the bottle of wine.

PHIL
More wine?

SHARI
Yes, please.

He fills her glass.

EXT. DON VITO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Stars sparkle like gems on black velvet. A wisp of air rustles leaves on a tree in the parking lot.

Raymond gets out of the car, lights a cigarette, and paces back and forth. He takes his Desert Eagle from its shoulder holster. He pulls back and releases the slide.

The others wait at their positions.

INT. DON VITO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

PHIL
How's your uncle?

SHARI
The whole thing's weighing on him.

PHIL
How about you?

She looks down at the table.

SHARI
I was eleven. I still remember
them very well.... At times, I
wonder how different life would be
had they lived.

She raises her head and looks at Phil.

SHARI
It's a matter of justice.

Phil breaks her gaze.

PHIL
Dessert?

SHARI
Tiramisu.

Phil raises his hand.

PHIL
Waiter!

EXT. DON VITO'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The gunmen wait.

Shari and Phil exit; a well-dressed man and well-dressed woman walk toward the entrance.

SHARI
Now I feel relaxed.

Two shots ring out followed by automatic fire. Restaurant windows shatter; glass showers the ground. Struck by gunfire, the well-dressed man and well-dressed woman fall. Blood splatters onto the concrete.

Phil and Shari crouch behind Phil's car. Shari returns fire with her PK380. Tommy rakes the car with automatic fire as he moves in. Fire continues for several minutes.

After the shooting stops, Dong and Tommy lie on the ground.

There are the faint sounds of distant sirens. Raymond and Chin get in their car and roar away.

Sirens blare as police cars arrive from every direction. Officers pile out with guns drawn. A BLOND-HAIRED OFFICER, 30s, approaches Shari and Phil.

BLOND-HAIRED OFFICER

What happened?

SHARI

Four men started shooting. One's over there.

She points toward Dong.

SHARI

Another's by the bushes. Others drove away.

PHIL

A man and woman near the door were hit.

The wail of sirens announces the arrival of an ambulance. Two paramedics exit the vehicle. PARAMEDIC #1, 20s, dashes to the aid of the well-dressed man and well-dressed woman. PARAMEDIC #2, 20s, goes to Dong.

PARAMEDIC #1

These two are done for.

PARAMEDIC #2

This one's dead.

Paramedic #2 walks to Tommy, who is down by the bushes.

PARAMEDIC #2

Bring the gurney. This one's alive.

Paramedic #1 opens the back of the ambulance, pulls out a gurney, and drops the wheels. He pushes it over to where Tommy lies.

The Blond-haired Officer checks for ID on Tommy. Paramedic #1 and Paramedic #2 place Tommy onto the gurney. Moments later, the ambulance speeds off.

The Blond-haired Officer walks over to Shari and Phil. In his hand are two billfolds.

BLOND-HAIRED OFFICER
Your name, miss?

SHARI
Shari Chen.

BLOND-HAIRED OFFICER
The men who attacked you are Tommy Luong and Dong Jeng Shieh. You know them?

SHARI
No.

BLOND-HAIRED OFFICER
Know why they'd wanna kill you?

SHARI
None, I could prove.

LATER

The Blond-haired Officer stands beside a squad car with Shari and Phil.

BLOND-HAIRED OFFICER
You folks can go. Thanks.

Phil walks over and looks at his car. The car is riddled with bullet holes. Every window is broken, and two tires shot out. He groans and shakes his head.

PHIL
My beautiful car looks like Swiss cheese.

He scratches the back of his head.

PHIL
What'll I tell the insurance company?

Shari slowly walks over and takes Phil by the forearm.

SHARI
Phil, sorry.

PHIL
Listen to me, going on.

He kicks one of the fattened tires.

SHARI

I didn't mean to get you involved.

PHIL

Ever thought about a safer line of work? A doctor perhaps?

SHARI

Police work is in the blood. Anything else would be... a betrayal.

PHIL

Are all your dates this dangerous?

SHARI

I don't date much.

Phil pulls out a cell phone.

PHIL

Looks like we're going home in a taxi.

INT. ASIAN WHOLESALE FOOD WAREHOUSE - FLOOR - DAY

The warehouse is dominated by tall rows of shelving. Employees with hand trucks and on forklifts hustle cases from place to place while they fill orders.

Shari enters the warehouse and waves to a man on a forklift. The FORKLIFT MAN, late 20s, stops.

SHARI

I'm looking for Mei-Lien Chong?

FORKLIFT MAN

The office.

SHARI

Where's that?

The Forklift Man turns in his seat and points.

FORKLIFT MAN

Behind that row of shelving.

Shari approaches the partially open office door.

OFFICE

A woman sits at a desk with her back to the door, an open file cabinet beside her. A fluorescent light hangs overhead.

SHARI

Excuse me. Are you Mei-Lien?

MEI-LIEN CHONG, 31, is an attractive business type. Her dark hair is twisted in a bun and accented by a pearl hairpin. Shrewd and crafty, she's not what the package appears. She holds several pieces of paper.

Startled, she looks over her shoulder.

MEI-LIEN

Yes, but I only see vendors on Tuesday and Friday.

SHARI

I'm no vendor. My name is Shari Chen.

She enters and extends her hand. Mei-Lien remains seated.

MEI-LIEN

Shari, nice to meet you.

They shake hands.

SHARI

Mind if I ask a few questions?

MEI-LIEN

Be brief. I haven't much time.

SHARI

What can you tell me about your father's business?

MEI-LIEN

He's making a go of it. I'm one of his suppliers. Still, father's not educated. Poor manager.

She stands, reaches, and opens the top file cabinet drawer. She removes a folder and opens it. She inserts one of the papers. She places the folder back into the cabinet and closes the drawer.

SHARI

What else?

Mei-Lien sits down at the desk. She stamps a paper and staples it onto another.

MEI-LIEN

All my time is spent on this operation. I'm remodeling and expanding the entire building.

She picks up an invoice and holds it in the air.

MEI-LIEN

The concrete alone is a small fortune.

She returns it to a pile.

MEI-LIEN

I've been taught that success comes from hard work. I'm working for me.

SHARI

How about your brother?

Mei-Lien looks up at Shari. A look of disdain crosses her face. She holds eye contact with Shari.

MEI-LIEN

Jered's not smart. No wonder he ended up in prison. He's a bore.

She breaks eye contact and turns her attention to the papers on the desk.

MEI-LIEN

It takes brains and determination for a woman to succeed. Often, success is thrown in a man's lap.

SHARI

It happens.

MEI-LIEN

I'm sure you've experienced the same discrimination.

SHARI

Can't say I have.

MEI-LIEN

Miss Chen, you'll have to excuse me. It's the end of the month, and I must close the books. Good help is hard to find, especially men.

SHARI

I appreciate your time. Goodbye.

Mai-Lien shuffles through papers on her desk. Shari turns toward the door.

MEI-LIEN
Bye, Miss Chen.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - SHARI'S OFFICE - DAY

Shari sits behind her desk. Lili stands a few paces away.

LILI
What happened at Mei-Lien's?

SHARI
She doesn't have a high opinion of men. A dead end.

Lili snacks on shrimp crackers from a bag.

SHARI
I'm going to check on Luong.

She stands up.

LILI
What should I do?

SHARI
Go to the police department and comb through the packages on Wu, Chong, and Jered. Get the names of every cop involved in any bust.

LILI
You're the boss.

SHARI
We're running out of options.

LILI
I'll go before I take Morgan to the library.

EXT. UNIVERSITY LIBRARY BLDG. - DAY

The building is constructed of brick and marble and surrounded by thick shrubs. Majestic maples cast shadows over a sea of bright green grass.

Lili and Morgan come out of the building and walk toward the parking lot. They get into Lili's bullet torn car.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN GOLF - DAY

MORGAN

Thanks for helping with my paper.

LILI

Today you learned the basics of gathering research. Stick with me, and you'll get smarter every year.

MORGAN

I feel like eating something.

LILI

What?

MORGAN

How bout ice cream?

LILI

You're getting smarter already.

She pulls down on the brim of his hat. They laugh.

INT. VOLKSWAGON GOLF - DAY - TRAVELING

Lili drives out of the parking lot and heads downtown. It's a beautiful day in the Bay Area. She rolls down the window and flips on the stereo.

Morgan plays on his Game Boy.

INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Shari prepares food on the counter. She walks to the refrigerator and gets a bottle of tomato juice. She walks back toward the counter. The bottle slips from her hand and falls onto the floor. It shatters.

EXT. VOLKSWAGON GOLF - DAY

A dark-colored car's bumper slams into the back of Lili's Golf. Lili's car swerves. The dark-colored car backs off.

INT. VOLKSWAGON GOLF - DAY - TRAVELING

Lili shrieks. Morgan drops his Game Boy.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - DAY

It's a four-lane, tree-lined street with small store fronts every few blocks. The area in transition from residential to commercial use.

The car backs off and pulls up alongside Lili's car.

Two armed men are inside the other car. The car edges over until it is inches from her door. ARMED MAN #1, 30s, levels a gun at Lili.

ARMED MAN #1

Pull over!

Lili pulls to the curb. The other car pulls up diagonally in front of her. The men brandish guns as they exit. Armed Man #1 approaches Morgan's side of the car. ARMED MAN #2, hurries to Lili's side.

Armed Man #2 motions them with his gun.

ARMED MAN #2

Outta the car!

Lili and Morgan get out. Behind Lili, Armed Man #2 grabs her arm and presses a gun to her back.

LILI

Let go of me! You can't get away with this.

MORGAN

Let her go!

Morgan takes a step toward Lili, but Armed Man #1 places his gun against the boy's temple. Morgan freezes.

Armed Man #2 places a damp cloth over Lili's mouth. She tries to cry out, but it's no use. She sees Armed Man #1 strike Morgan on the head with his gun. Her legs buckle. Her vision blurs. She becomes unconscious.

Armed Man #2 catches her before she falls. Armed Man #1 drags Morgan; his heels slide over the gravel. They load their victims' unconscious bodies into the back of their car and drive away.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - JIMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Shari rushes into the office. Jimmy sits at his desk.

SHARI

What's Nancy talking about?

JIMMY

Lili's car was abandoned, keys in it. Apparently, kidnapped.

Shari is visibly shaken. She lowers herself into a chair.

SHARI

Kidnapped! Oh no! First, I'm the target now them. What are the police doing?

JIMMY

The lab boys are going over the car.

She leans forward toward her uncle's desk.

SHARI

I never thought detective work would be like this.

JIMMY

Investigating the deaths of your parents is yesterday's news.

SHARI

Anything happens to them, it'll be my fault. Pursuing Mom and Dad's case wasn't smart.

JIMMY

Don't second guess yourself.

SHARI

Uncle Jimmy, you'll excuse...

She stands, thoroughly nonplussed. Jimmy's voice breaks her thought process.

JIMMY

Of course.

She drags herself to the door and opens it slowly.

INT. ASIAN WHOLESALE FOOD WAREHOUSE - FLOOR - NIGHT

The concrete floor shows stains from spills or product leaks. A cockroach intermittently crawls across the side of a cardboard box.

CONSTRUCTION AREA

Lili and Morgan lie on the concrete. Lili stirs and awakens. Beside her, Morgan is still unconscious. Tight ropes cut deeply into her reddened wrists. She struggles but can't free herself.

Morgan moves and opens his eyes.

LILI
 (softly)
 Morgan, can you hear me? Are you
 hurt?

MORGAN
 My head.

He has blood on the side of his face.

LILI
 That guy chloroformed me. Listen,
 I hear voices.

Morgan cocks his head.

CONSTRUCTION AREA ELSEWHERE

Mei-Lien and a BEARDED MAN, 30s, walk along aisles of
 shelves. They stop beside some shelves that separate them
 from Lili and Morgan's location.

MEI-LIEN
 First, they're bait them they'll be
 gotten rid of.

BEARDED MAN
 What's your plan.

MEI-LIEN
 Don't know yet.

INTERCUT - LILI AND MORGAN/MEI-LIEN AND BEARDED MAN

BEARDED MAN
 With this construction, why not
 blast'em and pour concrete over the
 bodies?

MEI-LIEN
 That'd work.

Lili and Morgan exchange frightened glances.

MEI-LIEN
 I've given instructions for
 employees to stay clear of the
 construction.

MORGAN
 (softly)
 What are we going to do?

LILI
(softly)
Pray.

INT. SHARI'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Shari enters her apartment, places her purse on the table, and goes to the kitchen.

KITCHEN

She robotically prepares tea. With tea in hand, she slowly walks to the living room.

LIVING ROOM

She shuffles to the window and gazes into the distance. The sun sets. In her head, she hears the voices of Lili and Morgan laugh during happier times.

She walks to the sofa, switches on the table lamp, and sits. She leans over and opens the coffee table drawer. Inside the drawer is an old family album. She removes it. She opens the cover; the laughter becomes more intense.

Her eyes fall upon a faint inscription inside the cover. The laughter goes silent.

SHARI (V.O.)
(reading)
"Dear Brother. Life may not always
be kind but is still worth living.
Record the lives of your family
between these pages, and you will
always know life's worth. George."

MONTAGE - A LONG NIGHT

-- Shari pages through the Album.

-- Shari paces the living room floor.

-- In the kitchen, Shari pours milk into a glass.

-- In the living room, Shari holds a framed photograph of herself with Lili and Morgan.

-- Shari paces the living room floor.

-- Shari looks out the window at the blue sky and the early morning sun.

END MONTAGE

She takes the iPhone from her purse and discovers it is turned off. She turns it on and scrolls through the messages. There's one from Uncle Jimmy. She plays it.

JIMMY (V.O.)
Shari, the police found something
in Lili's car. Call me.

She calls Uncle Jimmy's cell phone.

JIMMY (V.O.)
You got my message.

SHARI
What do you have?

JIMMY (V.O.)
We've been wrong. It wasn't the
agency being punished. It was your
Uncle Benson. He helped put Jered
Chong behind bars. His name is in
Lili's notebook along with other
officers who busted Jered.

SHARI
That blows the lid off.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - JIMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Jimmy and Shari sit in his office.

SHARI
I've gotten my head on straight.

JIMMY
I was worried.

SHARI
Dawson called; they found Lim's
killer a Richie Martinez.

JIMMY
How?

SHARI
A weapon sweep. They found broken
teeth concealed in his bed frame.
Matched Lim's blood type.

JIMMY
Has he talked?

SHARI

No. I'm going to Chong's
restaurant. Lili and Morgan could
be there.

She gets up and heads for the door.

INT. PRISON LIBRARY - DAY

Jered walks along the shelves and casually looks at books.
He selects one, walks over, and takes a seat. The librarian
pushes a cart filled with books and returns them to their
proper places.

The librarian passes behind some shelves and out of sight.

Jered reads and turns the page. An assailant's hand covers
his mouth and jerks his head backward. A blade flashes
across his throat. He gurgles; his arms go limp.

The assailant lowers Jered's head to the table. Footsteps as
they quickly walks away.

A pool of blood spreads over the book and onto the table.
Jered exhibits a blank stare.

The librarian comes down the aisle and sees Jered. He
hurries to a desk and picks up the phone.

INT. 7TH PRECINCT - GARAGE - DAY

Sergeant Rhoades and a patrolman walk toward one of the squad
cars. Simmons and a plain clothes officer walk up to them.
Simmons displays a badge.

SIMMONS

(to Rhoades)

Simmons, Internal Affairs. Come
with us.

RHOADES

What's this about?

SIMMONS

They'll explain upstairs.

He takes Rhoades by the arm, and he and the plain clothes
officer lead him away. With a puzzled look, the patrolman
looks on.

INT. CHINA FORTUNE RESTAURANT - DAY

Chong sees Shari through the window. She parks her car and walks toward the entrance. He draws his Glock and chambers a round. He turns to his gunmen seated at a table.

CHONG

Spread out! Let's nail this little bitch.

The gunmen jump to their feet and pull weapons. They take cover. Employees and patrons dive for cover. Others run toward the back of the restaurant.

Shari cautiously opens the restaurant door. Chong opens fire. Blam! Blam! Blam! She throws herself onto the floor and pulls the Walther PK380 from her waistband holster. Chong's gunmen join in as hell breaks loose.

Figurines and cabinet glass splinter and fly everywhere. The cash register pops open. A bowl of fortune cookies tumbles onto the floor. Employees and patrons scream. Fire is intense.

Gunman #1 tries to move closer. She fires; a bullet pierces his eye. Gunman #1 grabs the wound, groans, and falls flat on his back.

Gunman #2 positions himself beside some booths. A slug finds his neck. He stands, then collapses onto a table. Blood squirts from his jugular. He slides between the table and its upholstered seat.

Other gunmen continue to fire at Shari. Chong and Raymond creep toward the office.

CHONG'S OFFICE

Raymond watches the door. Chong grabs a briefcase and fills it with papers. He stops in his tracks. He picks up a family photo from the desk and stares at it.

FLASH BACK - INT. CHONG'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Chong sits in his office. A lamp on his desk emits the only light. A figure sits in the shadows.

CHONG

What're you driving at?

The figure moves enough to reveal the high heel of a woman's shoe. The sound as a lighter ignites. The flame floats upward in the darkness. It reveals the face of Mei-Lien Chong. She lights a cigarette.

MEI-LIEN

When Jered blew that last deal, the
Gold Talon bankrolled you.

CHONG

What'da you know about the triad?

MEI-LIEN

I'm part of it.

Mei-Lien takes a drag from her cigarette.

MEI-LIEN

You and Jered dishonored the
family. The triad wants its money.

CHONG

I need time. You're my daughter.
Help me.

Mei-Lien's gaze is cold.

MEI-LIEN

Where were you when I was a child?
Father, this isn't personal. It's
business.

CHONG

I --

Chong's jaw goes slack.

MEI-LIEN

I'll give time. Make the most of
it. Triad men back me. Clear?

CHONG

Yes,... it's clear.

INT. CHONG'S OFFICE - DAY - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Chong and Raymond stand in the office. Sadness clouds
Chong's features.

RAYMOND

Boss, are you okay?

CHONG

Yeah,... just thinking.

He lets out a sigh.

CHONG

When I left Mei-Lien in Hong Kong,
all those years ago, I hoped she'd
be different.

Gunfire continues in the background.

RAYMOND

Whad'ya mean?

CHONG

I always knew Jered would end up
like me,... but I wanted something
better for her.

He runs his fingers over the glass of the photo.

CHONG

Mei-Lien's mother never liked the
rackets. Said it would kill us.

He clenches his lips.

CHONG

Her mother was happiest after
talking to Mei-Lien or after
visiting Hong Kong. She'd say Mei-
Lien was going to be a lady. She'd
talk about Mei-Lien's beauty or how
smart Mei-Lien was becoming.

He places the photo inside the briefcase.

CHONG

Go to the warehouse and protect Mei-
Lien. I'll join you later.

Raymond scurries from the office. YEH, 30s, one of Chong's
gunmen, enters the office.

CHONG

Yeh, come with me.

EXT. CHINA FORTUNE RESTAURANT - DAY

Chong and Yeh scamper out the back door and toward Chong's
silver Lincoln.

INT. CHINA FORTUNE RESTAURANT - DAY

On hands and knees, Shari works her way down an aisle.
Automatic fire takes out the china and glassware on the table
above her head.

Gunman #3 pokes his head around a corner. The Walther shreds his ear like fresh cabbage. Blood and slivers of ear sail through the air. He howls with pain and pulls his head back.

Back on her feet, Shari finds her way to the storeroom, but Lili and Morgan are not there. She reaches the back door and sees the two men speed away.

EXT. CHINA FORTUNE RESTAURANT - DAY

Shari dashes out of the back door and heads for the corner of the building.

Shari tears around the corner to the front of the building and hops into the Mustang.

INT. SHARI'S MUSTANG - DAY

Shari turns her purse upside down and shakes things onto the seat. She snatches the key off the seat, pushes it into the ignition, and turns it.

The Mustang roars to life. She stomps the pedal to the floor, and the Mustang leaps forward.

EXT. CHINA FORTUNE RESTAURANT - DAY

The Mustang's tires spew dust and stones as it charges toward an asphalt road.

INT. LINCOLN - DAY - TRAVELING

Chong looks through the rear window and watches the Mustang far behind.

CHONG

Go to the marina.

YEH

Right, Boss.

EXT. SAN FRANCISCO STREETS - DAY

The area is a two-lane street in a business district. Yeh cuts around cars while he speeds down the street. A black man in the middle of the street turns and dives over the hood of a parked car. The chase continues.

Shari tries to close the distance.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY - TRAVELING

Shari makes a call on her cell.

DAWSON (V.O.)
Hello, Shari.

 SHARI
I'm tailing Chong toward the
marina.

 DAWSON (V.O.)
Backup's coming.

She disconnects the call and tosses the phone onto the seat.

EXT. MARINA - PARKING LOT - DAY

Chong and Yeh reach the marina, exit their car, and run onto a pier. Chong carries the briefcase.

PIER

They run down the wooden planks and up a small gangway that leads onto a small cabin cruiser.

INT. CABIN CRUISER - DAY

Chong enters the cabin, gets a key from a cabinet, and starts the motor.

EXT. CABIN CRUISER - DAY

Yeh unties the lines and pushes the gangway overboard. He looks toward the cabin. Chong drives into the channel.

EXT. MARINA - PARKING LOT - DAY

Shari slams on the brakes and slides across the gravel lot. She stumbles as she jumps out of the car.

She sprints toward a white and blue runabout tied at the refueling dock.

REFUELING DOCK

The runabout's motor hums. The boat operator stands on the pier and casts off the last line. Shari runs up.

 SHARI
I need your boat.

She leaps onto the runabout, slips behind the wheel, and pulls away. The boat operator stands with hands on his hips and watches her drive off.

EXT. RUNABOUT - DAY - TRAVELING

Shari takes the boat into the channel. Shari spots Chong a hundred yards away.

As she nears, Chong and Yeh open fire. Bullets rip into the hull of the runabout and glance off a stainless-steel cleat. Others demolish a small searchlight mounted at the cockpit. More slugs hit the outboard motor.

Her Walther answers their challenge.

INT. CABIN CRUISER - DAY - TRAVELING

Chong cuts in and out among the other boats.

EXT. CABIN CRUISER - DAY - TRAVELING

Yeh stands at the stern and continues to fire. One of Shari's rounds catches Yeh in the shoulder. He slides down onto the deck; he clutches the wound.

YEH
The bitch shot me!

INT. CABIN CRUISER - DAY - TRAVELING

Chong looks back and shoots through the open cabin door. He does not see partially submerged debris in front of the boat. The boat hits the debris and veers off. He frantically tries to maintain control and then loses it.

EXT. CHANNEL - DAY

Chong's boat bears down on a large yacht. Three occupants jump over its side. With a terrific crash, Chong's boat plows into the yacht, and they explode in a ball of flames. Debris flies everywhere. A column of smoke rises.

The three occupants splash around in the burning wreckage.

EXT. MARINA - REFUELING DOCK - DAY

Shari steers the runabout back to the dock. Detective Dawson stands with several officers. The boat glides up to the dock. She bounds off.

SHARI
That wasn't the way I wanted it.

DAWSON
We snagged two of Wu's thugs
tailing you.
(MORE)

DAWSON (CONT'D)

Luong's awake and implicated
Raymond in the Don Vito's shoot-
out.

SHARI

I'm going after Raymond. There's a
mess at China Fortune.

DAWSON

I'll take care of it.

PARKING LOT

She runs to her car, jumps in, and drives away.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY - TRAVELING

Shari spots Raymond's Marquis parked in front of the Asian
Wholesale food Warehouse. She drives down and parks on the
side of the building.

She checks her Walther, confirms she has extra clips in a hip
pouch, and exits the vehicle.

EXT. ASIAN WHOLESALE FOOD WAREHOUSE - DAY

Shari walks slowly along the side of the building to the
corner. Behind her, the sun yields to the night. She
carefully checks around the corner. Three men guard the main
entrance.

She retraces her steps past her car and looks around the
other corner. A mustached man stands guard.

She struts toward the mustached man.

SHARI

Can you help me? I'm lost.

He smiles.

When she gets close, she executes a snap kick to the abdomen.
It sends him into the wall.

The mustached man gets to his feet and reaches for a weapon.
With a roundhouse kick, she knocks him onto the ground. He's
motionless. She pats his cheek.

INT. ASIAN WHOLESALE FOOD WAREHOUSE - FLOOR - NIGHT

The warehouse is dark, but light streams from a far side of
the building.

Shari makes her way among a maze of stacked boxes. She looks up at shelves that tower above.

She climbs the shelves. High above, she gazes across the warehouse floor. She bounds from stack to stack. She jumps to another shelf. She almost loses her balance. Her arms wave in the air as she rocks back and forth.

OFFICE

Mei-Lien is at her desk; Raymond sits nearby. He looks at his watch.

RAYMOND

Your dad should've been here.

MEI-LIEN

I wouldn't count on Father.

FLOOR

Shari jumps to another shelf. One of the boxes dislodges and tumbles to the floor. Two men with automatic weapons look up. They riddle the boxes with lead. The liquid contents from some boxes stream out through jagged holes.

OFFICE

Raymond and Mei-Lien hear gunfire and look at each other.

MEI-LIEN

Surprise! Bet that's Miss Chen.

She reaches into a drawer and pulls out a Smith & Wesson M&P Compact 9mm.

Raymond pulls out his Desert Eagle, checks the clip, and chambers a round.

RAYMOND

I'm gonna party on her ass.

They rush for the door.

FLOOR

Shari moves to keep from being pinned down. She climbs on the side of a shelf. Bullets strike inches from her hands. She loses her grip and falls into an open dumpster.

She lies covered by half rotten garbage. The dumpster and its contents are mixed with bugs, including slimy maggots. She has maggots stuck on the back of her hand. She shakes them off.

Ping! Ping! Bullets strike the dumpster. She gets up and wades through the garbage to the one side. She peeps out and returns fire. A maggot sticks to the gun barrel.

SHARI

Scram. You don't bother me anymore.

She flicks it off with her finger.

More men join the fray. She wades to the other side of the dumpster and climbs out. Once on the floor, she steps around the corner and shoots a pock-faced man in the leg. The pock-faced man limps over and leans against a stack of boxes.

She passes behind a shelf and spots a man who wears a tank top and totes a machine pistol. A shot to the head and he falls forward into a frame of freshly poured concrete.

Mei-Lien and Raymond step out and throw lead in her direction. They duck behind a shelf. Shari fires.

Mei-Lien and Raymond fire in turn. Shari works her way past a large concrete dispenser.

RAYMOND

Split up. Don't let her get close. She knows martial arts.

MEI-LIEN

She's not the only one.

Shari tries to change location; Mei-Lien catches her in the open. They face off. They jockey for advantage.

Mei-Lien throws a jab. Shari blocks it. Shari uses a ridge hand strike to the side of Mei-Lien's neck. It finds its mark. The fight continues.

Mei-Lien counters with a snap kick. Shari partially blocks, but it lands on her hip. They maneuver in a circle.

Raymond presses his Desert Eagle to the back of Shari's head.

RAYMOND

That'll do.

He pulls the Walther from her waistband holster.

MEI-LIEN

Took you long enough.

She walks up to Shari. Mei-Lien slaps her with a forehand and backhand across the face.

MEI-LIEN

Bitch!

SHARI

I thought we were friends.

Two of Mei-Lien's thugs run up. Raymond hands Shari's Walther to THUG #1.

MEI-LIEN

Put her with the others. Family reunions are so touching.

THUG #2 grabs Shari by the arm, and they lead her away.

CONSTRUCTION AREA

Lili and Morgan hear footsteps. The thugs come around the corner with Shari in their grasp.

THUG #1

I'll get rope.

Thug #1 goes to a shelf several yards away. Thug #2 stands in front of Shari; he points a gun at her stomach.

Lili gives Shari a wink and a nod.

LILI

(to Thug #2)

Hey, asshole!

Thug #2 turns and looks at Lili.

THUG #2

What the --

Shari delivers a double punch that finds its mark in his solar plexus. A hammer fist to the neck and he's down.

Thug #1, with rope in hand, turns. Shari greets him with a spinning hook kick to the jaw. He drops like a sack of rice.

Thug #2 is up on his feet and attempts a snap kick. Shari blocks it and counters with a low sweep kick. It knocks him off his pins.

Before he can move, she's on him and executes a palm strike to the chin. She follows with a straight jab to the nose. He grunts; his head rolls to one side. Blood drips from his nose and mouth onto the concrete floor.

Shari walks over to Thug #1, pulls her Walther from his waistband, and goes to untie Lili's ropes.

SHARI
Good distraction.

LILI
Yeah, wondered how I knew his name.

SHARI
Untie Morgan.

She walks over and checks the two thugs.

SHARI
They're out. Take my car. It's in
back.

She tosses her keys to Lili.

SHARI
Be careful; Mei-Lien's men are out
there.

Lili and Morgan walk toward the rear exit. Shari heads off
in another direction.

Lili and Morgan pick their way among the boxes. Bearded Man
with an AK47 steps out. He raises it, ready to shoot. A
shot rings out. He falls to his knees and then forward onto
his face.

Shari stands behind his body, her Walther in hand. Smoke
from the gun barrel drifts away. The back of his head
exhibits a clean, round hole.

OFFICE

Mei-Lien and Raymond sit in the office. Mei-Lien puffs on a
cigarette. Raymond toys with his Desert Eagle. Blam! The
sound of a gunshot comes from the warehouse.

RAYMOND
That little bitch is on the loose.

Mei-Lien throws her cigarette onto the floor.

RAYMOND
No more Mr. Nice Guy.

FLOOR

Mei-Lien and Raymond exit the office. One of her men jogs
up. LAUNCHER MAN, 30s, carries a Hawk MM-1 grenade launcher.

MEI-LIEN
Any good with that?

Launcher Man pats his toy.

LAUNCHER MAN

The best.

MEI-LIEN

Come on. Time for some real fireworks.

Shari walks cautiously along one of the aisles. Launcher Man passes at the other end. He spots her and turns to fire. He pulls the trigger. She tumbles into an adjacent aisle.

Boom! Lo-mein noodles shower down, like confetti in a parade. She crawls back and looks down the aisle. Mei-Lien, Raymond, and Launcher Man walk in her direction.

LAUNCHER MAN

Boss, I think I got'er.

MEI-LIEN

Don't count on it.

Shari scrambles to her feet, trots to the end of another aisle, and disappears around the corner.

Mei-Lien, Raymond, and Launcher Man reach the near end.

RAYMOND

Where is she?

MEI-LIEN

Vanished.

Shari perches on a crate above one of the aisles. Below, Mei-Lien and Raymond walk past followed by Launcher Man. She drops down on Launcher Man's back. The impact causes his finger to move on the trigger; the weapon discharges.

The grenade's trajectory carries it toward the warehouse roof. Boom! It explodes and rips loose pieces of roof support beams. Some pieces dangle, whereas other pieces fall and crash onto the floor below.

Shari finds cover under a shelf.

Launcher Man tries to run. A length of angle iron, destined for the floor, strikes the top of his skull. Her falls to the floor. His head is split open to reveal brain matter. Blood flows from the gaping wound.

As pieces of support beams rain down, Mei-Lien and Raymond run for cover.

MEI-LIEN

Look out!

Raymond raises his arms above his head.

RAYMOND

Oh shit!

Mei-Lien reels about and looks for her gun. Unable to find it, she walks slowly to the corner of an aisle and leans against the shelf. Shari comes around the corner. They come face to face.

Mei-Lien runs and grabs a length of pipe from a nearby pile. She twirls it above her head. She swings it several times at Shari.

Shari dodges Mei-Lien's swings. She tumbles past Mei-Lien and reaches the pile. With a pipe of her own, she exchanges strikes with Mei-Lien. In a display of their skills, each blocks the other.

RAYMOND

Where are you?

MEI-LIEN

Over here. Put some lead in this bitch's brain.

Shari uses the pipe to vault over a line of boxes. She sprints toward a scaffold next to the concrete dispenser.

Raymond picks up Mei-Lien's S&W and hands it to her. They take off after Shari.

Shari climbs the scaffold steps with Mei-Lien and Raymond in pursuit. The scaffold surrounds three sides of the massive concrete dispenser.

Shari takes up a position behind a pile of lumber. Raymond crouches behind a wheelbarrow, and Mei-Lien is behind bags of concrete.

Bam! Bam! Bam! Raymond's Desert Eagle makes its presence known. Hot lead kicks up chunks of wood that fall into Shari's hair.

She hugs the pile of lumber. Mei-Lien fires several shots.

RAYMOND

Ya hit her?

MEI-LIEN

Can't get a clear shot.

Raymond rises to fire. Shari fires. Raymond's body jerks when the slugs strike him.

He totters on the edge of the scaffold. The gun slips from his fingers and clatters onto the scaffold floor. He drops to one knee and keels over.

Shari works her way around the pile of wood and bags of concrete. She looks for Mei-Lien. Everything is quiet.

She walks back to where Raymond lies. She looks at his body and then looks around.

A hand grabs her by the ankle.

SHARI

Ooooh!

She loses her balance and tumbles onto the scaffold floor. She rolls away and jumps to her feet. Raymond gets up.

She executes a flying side kick to his chest. The force drives him backward, off the scaffold, and into the dispenser filled with wet concrete.

In moments, he is chest deep in concrete. He struggles, tries to paddle through it. Blood covers his teeth and lips. He attempts to speak. Nothing comes out.

Slowly, he sinks beneath the surface. Blood is all that's left in the wet concrete.

Shari surveys the surroundings. Mei-Lien has vanished.

INT. BEIJING CLUB - DAY

Wu stands with two employees on the dance floor.

WU

Strip it again. Looks like hell.

DAWSON (O.S.)

I wouldn't worry about that.

Detective Dawson walks up to Wu. With him are three uniformed officers.

WU

What are you doing here?

DAWSON

Here to arrest you for the attempted murder of Shari Chen.

Dawson looks at the officers.

DAWSON

Boys.

The officers step forward, and two of them take Wu by the arms. Wu pulls loose.

WU

I can walk.

INT. CHEN DETECTIVE AGENCY - JIMMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Shari, Lili, and Detective Dawson sit in the office. Uncle Jimmy leans back in his chair.

DAWSON

Internal Affairs picked up a Sergeant Rhoades. He was under investigation in another case.

SHARI

That is good news.

DAWSON

After Lim's death, Mrs. Rhoades' bank account got an infusion of cash. Rhoades was Chong's inside man.

Jimmy reaches over, takes a cigar from the ashtray, and relights it.

JIMMY

Maxwell informed me Jered has been murdered.

SHARI

Looks like the triad cleaning up.

DAWSON

Wu's safely tucked away.

LILI

(to Shari)

Do you think Howard Chong was sorry for what he did?

SHARI

Sis, his kind is never sorry. They're only sorry they get caught.

LILI

What about Mei-Lien?

JIMMY

Justice has a way of prevailing,
and her time will come.

Lili has an uncertain look on her face.

LILI

By the way, why did you have me
check all the rap sheets?

Shari grins.

SHARI

As Sherlock Holmes could say, "It's
elementary, my dear Watson." We
exhausted other avenues. It was
logical to check details of old
arrest records. Often, clues are
right under one's nose.

Shari looks at the portrait of George Chen.

SHARI

Uncle Jimmy, Great-grandfather
would be proud, wouldn't he?

Jimmy looks at the portrait.

JIMMY

Yes, he would be proud.... Very
proud.

FADE OUT.

THE END