

DECEPTIONS

by Richard Taylor

FADE IN:

Begin Credits:

EXTERIOR AN L.A. STREET - NIGHT

A beat-up, egg-shell Porsche brakes at a stop light beside an immaculate red Ferrari.

INSIDE THE PORSCHE

is PETE GENTRY. He's give-a-damn good-looking, maybe 33, well-built. There is something special about Gentry. Maybe it's the careless way he holds the wheel. Maybe it's the scratched-up leather jacket or the haircut one week past neat. Or maybe it's something secret and hidden and waiting to explode. Whatever it is, it's there in spades.

Gentry's vision trails over to the car idling beside him, a red Ferrari. Gentry casually takes in the car, then the driver, a silk-and-designer-jeans Hollywood type, who first recognizes Gentry's existence with an expression of disdain, then a grin of anticipation. Gentry returns his eyes to the stop light before gently easing the ancient Porsche into first. A race.

Moments pass. Light still red. More moments. Green light. The Ferrari roars off the line ahead of the Porsche. Gentry corrects an early fish-tail, shifts into second. Third. The cars are bumper-and-bumper. Fourth. Porsche pulling ahead.

Fifth. The Ferrari is falling behind. Shitty driver.

The Ferrari brakes and executes a sharp left in shame. Still powering forward, Gentry grins.

A moment later an LAPD black-and-white pulls in behind him.

INT. MOVING BLACK-AND-WHITE - NIGHT

Two cops, VET and ROOKIE.

VET

Okay, let's take him.

Lights and siren go on.

INT./EXT. GENTRY'S PORSCHE - NIGHT

Gentry sees the black-and-white's flashing lights behind him. He reaches over, removes a small detachable roof lamp from the glove compartment and plugs it in.

INT. MOVING BLACK-AND-WHITE - NIGHT

Vet and Rookie watch as Gentry's flashing detachable lamp is secured to the top of his Porsche via a magnet base. The Porsche accelerates away.

ROOKIE

Hey!

But Vet has already shut off the black-and-white's siren and flashing roof lights.

ROOKIE

He's getting away!

VET

I've seen that kind of action before. He's a hot-shot detective. Probably vice or homicide. And he'd love us to pull him over. I won't give him the pleasure.

End credits.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. TRANCAS BEACH - DAY

An hour after sunrise. A lonely jogger pounds up the sand. A moment after sand has stopped cascading into his footprints, a woman walks from the sea. Her beauty is arresting and uncalculated. ADRIENNE.

Nearby, a house, a cool two million five if it's a dime. A huge two-story window fronts the sea, and below, a deck and exterior staircase. Retrieving a towel from the sand, Adrienne makes for the house.

INT. ERICKSEN LIVING ROOM - DAY

Adrienne lets herself in via the sliding door. The place is chic and expensive. She ascends the steps to the second floor.

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE BEDROOM - DAY

DOUGLAS ERICKSEN, 40, a self-made man whose single pretense is that he has none, tosses a leather suitcase onto the bed. Bare-chested, he intends to pack and dress at the same time.

Adrienne enters and moves for the bathroom, unsnapping and removing the bikini top as she goes.

Douglas pulls on a beige business shirt, buttons the front, starts on the cuffs when Adrienne, wearing nothing but a towel bunched in front of her, steps into the doorway.

ADRIENNE

Douglas?

Adrienne smiles alluringly. She is the most beautiful, naked, juicy woman imaginable. But Douglas is a tough guy.

DOUGLAS

(reluctantly)

You'll make me late for my plane.

ADRIENNE

Then hurry home.

Yes. He will.

EXT. ERICKSEN DRIVEWAY - DAY

Douglas places his bags in the trunk of his Mercedes. Adrienne watches nearby. He stops at the car door and looks at her a long moment before:

DOUGLAS

Tomorrow.

Douglas pulls her into an embrace. Gentle, he nonetheless lifts her up to meet him. Their lips linger before:

ADRIENNE

Tomorrow.

Douglas slides behind the wheel and a moment later the Mercedes backs out of the driveway and motors south.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ERICKSEN HOUSE DECK - NIGHT

Adrienne leans against the rail nursing a drink.

The wash of the sea is an endless noise. Up and down Trancas Beach few house lights are lit. She could be the only person for miles.

Finishing the drink, Adrienne gives the night one final look before entering the house.

INT. ERICKSEN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adrienne slides the door closed and locks it.

A moment later she checks the front door. It's locked too.

A moment after that, she stops at the staircase long enough to shut off the television with the remote before tossing it to the couch and ascending the steps.

INT. ERICKSEN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adrienne slips beneath the covers, then reaches for the bedside lamp. An instant later her eyes are high-lighted by moonlight sliced by blinds. She closes her eyes. An effort.

SOME TIME LATER

Adrienne jerks at an almost imperceptible noise from below. She reaches for the bedside lamp, then reconsiders. Rising from the bed, she grabs a robe, pulls it on, and then stands perfectly still, listening.

Nothing.

She is almost ready to dismiss the whole thing when she hears a noise. Distantly. From below.

Adrienne tip-toes to the door, turns the knob, slowly pulls it open. It starts to creak. She freezes. Shit! Nudging it open but a little, the door creaks again. No escaping the noise, Adrienne gently opens the door wide enough to slip through.

HALLWAY AND STAIRS - ADRIENNE

opens a hallway cabinet, withdraws a flashlight but does not turn it on. She stands perfectly still, listening. Nothing. She tip-toes to the stairs, begins to descend.

A thud followed by the sound of shattering porcelain.

Adrienne freezes and listens, but hears nothing. Pounding heart. Blood pulsating through her veins. Someone could be down there.

The flashlight beam flits out and down the staircase, making ordinary reality out of the darkness far below: A chair leg. The drapes. A painting. Moments later:

ADRIENNE

Is there someone there?

Another noise. Close. Near the bottom of the stairs. Adrienne gasps, then whips the heavy flashlight around, swinging it from place to place. The shafting beam catches nothing.

Adrienne steels herself and descends.

LIVING ROOM - ADRIENNE

reaches floor-level and sweeps the light across the mass of oblong shapes that briefly become her furniture before again being swallowed by darkness.

She advances to the sliding glass door, checks that it is locked again, then turns. As she does, the flashlight catches something slashing toward her! She jumps back... only to discover that it's a shadow created by the flashlight in her hand. Adrienne calms herself -- before a noise wrenches her around. She swings the light.

ADRIENNE

Who's there? Who's there?!

Something leaps from the darkness and lands nearby. Adrienne brings the beam to bear on... Buttermilk, her startled Siamese cat, whose diamond eyes glow in the dark.

Sagging, Adrienne laughs at her own fright. She reaches out to the animal and it gladly moves into her arms. As she pets the cat:

ADRIENNE

Buttermilk! Jesus! You nearly scared me to death!

Behind Adrienne is a glass wall before the ocean. The face, then torso of a man rises from the beach and approaches.

Adrienne moves away, still petting the cat.

ADRIENNE

If you broke any of my china,
that's it for you, kid.

She turns around just as the intruder drops out of sight.

ADRIENNE
(Buttermilk)
Do you hear, hmmm? Do you hear?

Turning again, Adrienne cannot see the intruder approach the glass. His face looks gruesome, as if melted in a fire. Then it becomes clear. He's wearing a stocking.

Adrienne cuddles Buttermilk to her cheek lovingly. She dotes on this animal.

At the window now, the intruder's face presses against the glass. He stares down at her. His gloved hands flex in anticipation.

ADRIENNE
Let's put us to bed, hm?

Adrienne stands. Buttermilk sees the intruder and howls in fright before clawing Adrienne in its desire for flight. Adrienne releases Buttermilk.

ADRIENNE
Ow! Buttermilk! What's wrong with you?!

She turns and sees the intruder beyond the glass. Adrienne screams.

The intruder picks up a deck chair and throws it through the window, which shatters into a thousand splinters.

Adrienne retreats to the stairs as the intruder leaps through the gaping hole in the glass and pursues.

ADRIENNE
No! No! NNNnnnoooooo!

STAIRS & HALLWAY - ADRIENNE & THE INTRUDER

One gloved hand grabs her ankle. Another draws the blade whose jagged edge glints from some unknown light. Adrienne kicks, crawling backward up the stairs, before throwing the heavy flashlight, catching the intruder in the face. A second is bought and Adrienne spends it separating herself -- two feet, three, four -- from the intruder before spinning to run. But his hands grope for her, missing her heels by inches as she ascends the stairs.

Adrienne hears the intruder's foot-fall behind her as she reaches the bedroom doorway and through, slamming the door behind her.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adrienne locks the door and retreats a step as something -- someone -- slams into it.

ADRIENNE

No! No! I'll give you money!
Just go away! Please go away!

The sound changes. Before a shoulder blow, now it is made by a boot.

Adrienne flinches each time the noise impacts and retreats behind the bed. She grabs the phone. No dial tone. Adrienne lurches for something in the darkness as the jamb begins to splinter. An instant later the intruder bursts through the door and leaps at her. Adrienne spins and flees as the intruder's blade seeks her flesh.

Suddenly a BANG! and a brilliant burst of light. Another. Another. Muzzle flashes capture the intruder in a sequence of still-lives as he's thrown back across the room. Six portraits. Then darkness.

Adrienne lies sobbing on the floor.

MOMENTS LATER

Adrienne crawls to a wall switch and light fills the room. She stands, finally, and looks at the hooded man who lies in a pool of his own blood across the room.

Adrienne approaches the body and leans close. Her hand reaches out and pauses inches from the stocking. Then in a brief, brave instant she yanks the mask clear, exposing the dead face of:

Her husband. Douglas Ericksen!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ERICKSEN BEDROOM - NIGHT

Adrienne, her face tear-streaked, sits in a chair across the room from the body, which is now being loaded onto a gurney by two white-coated attendants. Several uniformed LAPD officers stand nearby talking casually.

Closer, a man sits on the bed near Adrienne. The beat-up Porsche driver. LAPD Detective Sergeant Pete Gentry.

GENTRY

What then?

But Adrienne has lapsed into never-never land. Gently:

GENTRY

What did you do after you
discovered it was your husband?

Just outside the bedroom door, DETECTIVE LEON KESSLER, 55, a burly knot of a man wearing more traditional cop clothes, a wrinkled sport combo and tie, finishes taking a statement from JOANNE PETERS, an attractive woman Adrienne's age, and enters the room jotting notes down on a small spiral-bound tablet.

ADRIENNE

I... went downstairs, but that
phone isn't working either.

(stops; almost loses
control)

Then I ran I ran to Joanne Peters
house. It's the next one down the
beach.

GENTRY

(gently)

Mrs. Ericksen, did you have any
idea that your husband wanted to
kill you?

The very mention of it almost makes her reject it. Then:

ADRIENNE

No! I love... loved him. I
thought he loved me.

She can't deny a look at the sheet-covered body of her dead husband as it's wheeled out of the room. Then she buries her head in her hands and sobs gently. Gentry, obviously sympathetic, is helpless.

Leon sits down on the bed. Adrienne bobs, adjusting to his weight. Then:

LEON

Mrs. Ericksen, I gotta be honest
with you. Something bothers me
here. You say your husband left on
a business trip to San Francisco
this morning. Then he comes back
here tonight, breaks in, and tries
to murder you with a knife.

(MORE)

LEON (cont'd)

And yet he forgets that he left his
.357 Magnum revolver in the bedside
table drawer. That seems... what,
Pete? Inconsistent?

ADRIENNE

What are you implying?

LEON

I'm not implying anything, lady.
All I'm trying to say is...

ADRIENNE

You're saying I wanted to kill my
husband? You're saying --
(more hysterical)
You're saying I wanted to kill--

Gentry shoots his partner an angry look. He reaches out,
touches Adrienne's arm.

GENTRY

Mrs. Ericksen, it's okay! We can
continue this tomorrow when...
(another angry look at
Leon)
when you're feeling up to it.

But Adrienne cannot hold back the torrent of rage, pain and
tears.

ADRIENNE

Well, let me tell you, Officer, my
husband didn't know it was there!
It was in the shop being repaired.
I picked it up last week and forgot
to tell him about it!

Joanne Peters, seeing Adrienne's mental state from the
doorway, enters the room and rushes to Adrienne's side.

JOANNE

Addie, are you okay?

Joanne wraps her in protective arms, trying to calm her.

ADRIENNE

(reality sinking in)
Forgot... Forgot to tell him...
Forgot...

Adrienne collapses into sobs. Joanne's angry stare sears
into Gentry a moment before he turns to Leon and gestures,
Outside. Leon sighs and exits as Gentry rises:

GENTRY

Mrs. Ericksen, we can finish taking
your statement tomorrow.

HALLWAY & STAIRS - GENTRY & LEON

exit the bedroom and descend the stairs.

GENTRY

Nice going, Leon.

LEON

I'm not in the comfort business.
I'm in the truth business.

GENTRY

You're not going to gain anything
by turning her into a hostile
witness.

LEON

If she's guilty, she's already
hostile. Just ask her husband.

He glares at Gentry. Gentry glares back. Then he grins.
These guys have been sparring for years. There's a facetious
cynicism to their banter.

GENTRY

So what do you think?

LEON

I think she did it.

GENTRY

You think everybody did it.

LEON

Everybody did do it. They just
aint been caught.

GENTRY

Got it figured, huh?

LEON

Well, I dunno, Pete. Maybe he left
the gun in the drawer because he
was fair-minded and wanted to give
her a fighting chance. What do you
think?

GENTRY

I think I'll keep an open mind.

LEON

You gotta watch that. Who knows what'll blow through there.

EXT. ERICKSEN HOUSE WALKWAY - NIGHT

Gentry and Leon exit and move for the side of the house. Two neighbors are busy pounding a sheet of plywood over the hole made by the intruder. Farther along the side of the house, a wire junction box.

LEON

Here's where the wires were cut. All of the various lines come into the house at this point. Cable. Security. Phone. He knew which ones to cut. Hell, it was his house, wasn't it?

Severed wires hang from the junction box.

GENTRY

Whoa, whoa! Slow down! I thought you said she did it? Now you're telling me the husband planned the whole thing?

LEON

I'm not telling you anything. But ask yourself one question. That girl's a walking wet-dream. Why would anyone want to put an end to something that sweet?

GENTRY

You're right. She's too pretty to be innocent. Let's fry her.

LEON

Okay. You've got my opinion. So what's yours? Really.

GENTRY

I think she's one hot-looking woman with a lot of money and a lot of time to enjoy it.

(grin)

Just my type.

LEON

She's your type, all right. She just offed her husband.

GENTRY

At least she's single.

LEON

(laughs)

Oh Jesus, I gotta go home. You're making me sick.

EXT. REAR OF HOUSE - NIGHT

Gentry follows Leon out the rear gate. Leon moves for his unmarked police cruiser and a moment later its engine fires. Leon throws Gentry a wave and backs the car out.

Gentry stops beside his Porsche and digs for the keys. Something captures his attention:

A large window in the Ericksen guest bedroom. Adrienne stops and stares off into space. A moment later she removes the robe and stands nude and beautiful before the glass. Finally, she moves away.

Gentry stands frozen, unable to move. Adrienne.

EXT./INT. THE EGG-SHELL PORSCHE - NIGHT

Ride with Gentry as he steers the Porsche southward on The Coast Highway toward the city. Gentry pushes the car faster and faster. Thoughts. Thoughts on his mind.

EXT. GENTRY'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Gentry steers the Porsche into his normal "spot" near the entrance to the three-story building, exits, moves for the front door.

INT. GENTRY'S BUILDING HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gentry has his key in the lock when the door to the next apartment opens and LINDA, 26 and a looker, leans out. Seeing it's Gentry, she slips out into the hall. A short robe conceals almost nothing.

LINDA

(whispering)

Pete...

GENTRY

What are you doing here?

LINDA

I got back into town early. Our radar went haywire over Denver and we're on the ground 'til it's fixed.

Gentry grins. He knows Linda very well and is happy to see her. He takes her into his arms and is about to kiss her when she pulls away.

LINDA

I left a message on your machine... Pete, I'd invite you in, but... I have a friend staying over.

As if introduced, the door opens and her FRIEND takes a step into the hall. He's one sweat-stained muscle. He wears a towel. Nothing else.

LINDA'S FRIEND

Hey, Linda, where'd ya go?

Linda's Friend takes one look at Gentry's hands on his girl and frowns. Linda writhes free.

LINDA

(faking it)
Tomorrow. And I'd really appreciate it, Pete.
(to Friend)
Pete's my neighbor. He's going to give me a hand tomorrow with some --

Disgusted, Gentry enters his apartment before she can finish explaining.

INT. GENTRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Neat it isn't. Nor homey. Nor telling of the man who lives here. Its lack of permanence is a statement itself.

Gentry exits the bathroom wearing a robe. He pours himself two fingers of liquor and drops onto the bed. He sips the whiskey.

A sound. From the apartment next door. A pounding noise. Rhythmic. Linda's bed hitting the wall. And then another noise. A woman's voice. Linda's. Ecstasy.

Gentry sips. Thinks.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. L.A.P.D. WESTSIDE STATION - DAY

Establish.

INT. DETECTIVE'S ROOM - DAY

8x10 glossies drop to a table top. Each is of Douglas Ericksen. Dead. Mask half-pulled off. Bullet holes and blood everywhere.

Gentry, holding a phone to his ear and eating idly from a huge pastry, drops the last photo and stares at them, thinking.

Leon enters with a cup of steaming water and takes one sour look at Gentry's pastry before:

GENTRY
(irritated)
What? What are you looking at?

LEON
Chemicals. They got chemicals in that doughnut that could preserve a fart.

Leon sits behind his desk, pulls out a tin of herb tea, begins preparing his morning ritual.

GENTRY
Leon, you're thirty pounds overweight.

LEON
Yeah, but they're good pounds. No chemicals. No junk.

Gentry's expression says, Oh, Jeez.

GENTRY
(phone)
Hello? No, that's okay. I'm on city time... Well, thanks. We appreciate the cooperation.
(hangs up; referring to notes)
Douglas Ericksen checked into the Mark Hopkins at 10:30 yesterday morning. No one at the desk can identify him, but he used a credit card and signed both the receipt and the desk register.

LEON

What about his stuff?

GENTRY

It's still there. That was a San Francisco PD detective named Larson. He just inventoried everything in Ericksen's room.

LEON

(as if saying, "Go on.")
Yeah? So?

GENTRY

More notable for what wasn't found. No receipt for a second set of airline tickets. Just Ericksen's bags filled with clothes. His appointment book.

This perks Leon up.

LEON

Yeah? What about -- ?

GENTRY

Already checked. No San Francisco appointments penned in. No San Francisco numbers or contacts, either.

Leon considers that a moment. Then:

LEON

That just doesn't figure. Guy plans on killing his wife, he'd be sure to make the alibi look good.

Grabbing his coat off the back of a chair:

GENTRY

The appointment book doesn't prove anything. Maybe he was a bad record-keeper.

LEON

Sure. That's how he got rich.

GENTRY

Okay, one of us has to check the airport for his car and travel reservations, and one of us has to go back out to the beach and finish taking Mrs. Ericksen's statement. Which do you want?

LEON

I have a choice, right?

Gentry grins. Sure you do.

EXT. ERICKSEN HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAY

Gentry's Porsche pulls into the driveway and Gentry exits and moves for the side of the house.

EXT. SIDE DOOR OF ERICKSEN HOUSE - DAY

Gentry pushes the street gate open and paces down the walk siding the house to the door. He taps on the glass.

GENTRY

Mrs. Ericksen! Mrs. Ericksen!

No answer. There's a sheet of paper folded and taped to the door. He flips it up and reads: Glass installers: I'll be back soon. Please get the job started. Adrienne Ericksen. Gentry pushes the door. It swings open.

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - DAY

Gentry enters, closing the door behind him.

GENTRY

Mrs. Ericksen?

Again, no answer. He ascends the steps and a moment later descends them.

The billowing drape tells him the deck door is open.

EXT. ERICKSEN HOUSE DECK - DAY

Gentry steps outside. A moment later he's leaning on the rail, allowing the wind to caress him. His body language seems to say, God, I could get used to this! Then he sees:

Adrienne running from the sea. She wears a skimpy bikini, her hair tussled and sexy. She moves up the beach and doesn't notice the man standing on her deck until she is half-way up the steps.

ADRIENNE

Oh!

GENTRY

Sorry. Didn't mean to startle you.

Gentry's can't help himself. He's taking in every inch of her.

Adrienne attempts to break the spell she's cast on Gentry by continuing up the steps.

ADRIENNE

I often take a swim in the morning.
The beach is lonely then and the
water cool.

GENTRY

Nice. To be able to do that, I
mean.

She has stopped not two feet from him and he's doing a terrible job of hiding his lust. She inches closer, then:

ADRIENNE

You're blocking my way. To the
door.

Stepping out of the way:

GENTRY

Oh. Sorry.

He follows her inside.

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - DAY

Gentry watches Adrienne cross the living room to a closet where a short terricloth robe hangs. She pulls it on, turns before his sight can rise. She cinches the robe with finality.

ADRIENNE

I'm flattered, Sergeant. Under
happier circumstances, I would be
very flattered. Can I get you
something?

GENTRY

Something?

ADRIENNE

To drink?

(moving to kitchen)

No. You're a cop and you're on duty, so you don't drink. Well, I need a drink.

She finds a bottle in a cupboard, reaches up to get it. Gentry watches the robe ride up her long, lovely legs.

GENTRY

Bourbon.

Surprised, she looks over her shoulder at him, then pours several fingers of Bourbon into a water glass, drops in ice.

ADRIENNE

(giving him drink)

I'm... trying to adjust my thinking. Trying to see things the way they are. It's funny. The world doesn't look any different.

GENTRY

(gesturing plywood)

You seem to be doing okay. You've already arranged for the glass to be replaced.

Leading him into the living room area:

ADRIENNE

Oh, that. Joanne made the arrangements this morning. She's been very supportive.

GENTRY

Did you spend the night here?

ADRIENNE

(with difficulty)

Yes. In the guest bedroom. I couldn't... stay in there. With Douglas's blood on the carpet, I mean. It's like... part of him is still up there.

Seeing her pain, Gentry takes a gulp of his drink and shifts gears.

GENTRY

(opening notebook)

Mrs. Ericksen, I need to finish taking your statement. For our report.

ADRIENNE

Certainly. I'll cooperate any way I can.

GENTRY

You said last night that your husband's gun had only recently come back from the gunsmith's. When was that?

ADRIENNE

A couple of weeks. I don't remember the exact date. There's an invoice around here somewhere.

(rising)

I can get it --

GENTRY

Not necessary. I just need a name.

ADRIENNE

Santa Monica Gun and Rail. Something like that. It's on Lincoln Boulevard.

GENTRY

The owner called you?

ADRIENNE

I imagine he's the owner.

GENTRY

He called you?

ADRIENNE

Yes. Is that important?

GENTRY

Well, it tends to substantiate that the gun was in the drawer by circumstance. The time and date of its return was not under your control.

ADRIENNE

I don't understand. Why is that important?

GENTRY

It suggests there wasn't
premeditation involved in your
husband's death.

Adrienne's eyes bore into him. Finally:

ADRIENNE

That man last night. That police
officer...

GENTRY

Detective Kessler.

ADRIENNE

I thought he was... just an ugly
little man. I didn't take him
seriously. I'm under suspicion for
--

?

GENTRY

All possibilities are considered in
a homicide investigation.

Adrienne flinches at the word homicide and turns her eyes
away. When again she looks at Gentry, her eyes are red and
tear-filled.

ADRIENNE

I loved my husband, Sergeant. I
loved him... passionately. If he
hadn't been wearing a mask, I don't
think I could have... pulled the
trigger.

Tears roll down her cheeks. She is fighting to retain
control of herself. Gentry is silenced by her emotions.
Finally:

GENTRY

Mrs. Ericksen, I've got to cover
this territory.

She gestures a mute consent.

GENTRY

How was your husband's business
going? Were there financial
problems?

Adrienne straightens, gains control over herself. These are every-day matters.

ADRIENNE

My husband was a financial advisor. He always made a good income. As far as I know, everything was fine.

GENTRY

He didn't bring his work home with him?

ADRIENNE

No. Douglas kept work and home separate. When he worked, he worked hard. When he played, well... He never talked business.

GENTRY

I'll need a business address.

ADRIENNE

Three eleven Hauser. That's in Beverly Hills.

GENTRY

(jotting down address)
Did you and your husband have a death benefit insurance policy?

ADRIENNE

Yes. He keeps... kept all of our important papers in the floor safe at his office. It's a substantial sum. I don't recall the amount. I saw it for all of five minutes.

GENTRY

Do you have the combination to your husband's safe?

ADRIENNE

No. The subject just never came up. Douglas took care of me. He was that kind of man.

Gentry pauses, gauging her durability before asking:

GENTRY

Did you ever suspect there might be another woman?

The pain of the question rolls across her expression.

ADRIENNE

No. Never.

GENTRY

Is it possible he could have been seeing someone and you not know about it?

ADRIENNE

No. I don't think so...

(tearful)

Sergeant, I don't know what to believe about my husband. Not anymore.

Gentry leans close.

GENTRY

Mrs. Ericksen, the best possible scenario we can make of this is that your husband attempted to murder you in cold blood. He did that for some reason. You've got to help me find that reason.

Adrienne writhes with the question, shaking, tears cascading down her cheeks as her mind questions everything her married life has been up until this moment.

ADRIENNE

I don't know! I don't know!

(sobbing)

I don't know—I don't know—I don't know... why my husband didn't love me!

She collapses into herself, burying her head in her arms.

Gentry struggles with himself. His professionalism dictates that he retain distance. And yet... Gentry rises, crosses to the couch, lays a hand on her shoulder.

GENTRY

Mrs. Ericksen, is there anything I can --

Adrienne turns and buries herself in Gentry's arms. Startled, Gentry pulls her into an embrace. His hand reaches out to stroke her hair, but stops inches from contact. Sensing his awkwardness, she looks up. Their eyes connect. Each realizes desire for the other. Finally, she pulls away.

ADRIENNE
(straightening)
I'm sorry. I shouldn't act like...

Shaky, she turns away. Gentry reaches out to steady her.

GENTRY
Can I get you something?

ADRIENNE
No. Actually, I have a
prescription. Something to calm me
down.

GENTRY
You've seen your doctor since last
night?

Adrienne pulls away, begins to move for the stairs.

ADRIENNE
No. I take them for... I get
depressed, sometimes. Sergeant,
I'm sorry, but they usually make me
sleep. Perhaps tomorrow?

GENTRY
Sure. Tomorrow.

Gentry watches as she ascends the stairs. A part of him
wants to follow her. He hears the door upstairs close before
turning and moving for the exit.

EXT. FAST-FOOD FRANCHISE - DAY

Gentry and Leon at the counter. Gentry looks troubled.

GENTRY
(to counter girl)
Coffee. That's it.

As the counter girl rings up Gentry's order:

LEON
Jesus, what's the matter with you?
This is the perfect opportunity to
load up on empty calories.

GENTRY
Not hungry, that's all.

COUNTER GIRL
That's sixty-five.

Gentry gives her a five. As she makes change:

LEON

So what did you find out?

GENTRY

(shrugs)

If there's another woman, she doesn't know about her. She also says that as far as she knows her husband's business was doing fine.

LEON

Insurance policy?

GENTRY

Joint survivor's benefit. She says it's substantial. She doesn't recall the exact amount.

LEON

Ha! I believe that!

COUNTER GIRL

(counting change)

Seventy-five, a dollar, two, three, four, and five.

(Leon)

Sir?

LEON

I don't know. You got anything other than crap?

COUNTER GIRL

(insulted)

I'm sorry, sir?

LEON

You know. Grease. You got anything that doesn't have grease in it? Like maybe a salad?

COUNTER GIRL

No, we don't have salads, sir. We have a chicken sandwich.

LEON

How's it prepared?

Gentry is beginning to look like he doesn't know this guy.

COUNTER GIRL

Sir?

LEON

Is it deep-fried in oil? Is it
fried on a grill? Is it --

COUNTER GIRL

It's micro-waved.

LEON

Micro-waved?!

COUNTER GIRL

It comes frozen, sir!

LEON

Oh, never mind. Give me a B-L-T,
hold the B, hold the mayo, on
sourdough toast. And herb tea.

COUNTER GIRL

Herb tea?

AT A TABLE - GENTRY AND LEON

eat lunch.

GENTRY

How 'bout you?

LEON

Ericksen checked his Mercedes in at
the airport garage at nine o'clock.
It's still there.

(sniffing sandwich)

They put mayo on this. I can smell
--

GENTRY

Leon, how did he get to his house?

LEON

-- it. I hate... What?

GENTRY

How did Ericksen get to his house
last night? His car was parked at
LAX.

LEON

Maybe he rented a car.

GENTRY

Or someone drove him.

Leon grins.

LEON

Like a girlfriend, right? Which gives him a motive for killing his wife. Jesus, isn't this cute? You're trying to clear the girl, aren't you, Gentry? You're thinking with your glands. Has it ever occurred to you -- maybe she has a boyfriend? Maybe he flew to San Francisco. Maybe he left Ericksen's car at LAX.

GENTRY

Maybe the Pope's a communist.

LEON

Hell, for all I know, he is!

GENTRY

(rising)

Okay, you take the car rental agencies at LAX. I'll check with the cab companies.

LEON

Oh, Jesus. Back to LAX. The traffic's awful...

GENTRY

(rising)

I'll meet you at Ericksen's office at four.

(jotting down address)

Here's the address.

Gentry turns, but something happening at the counter stills him:

Two latinos, obviously gang members wearing their "colors," divide just inside the door. One pulls a sawed-off shotgun from beneath a jacket and aims it toward the eaters. The second bares a handgun and leaps the counter to begin emptying cash registers.

HANDGUN

(to register girl)

Back off, bitch!

He gives her a shove. She collides with the stove and burns her arm. Handgun pays her no mind.

Shotgun is grinning and sweating. The glare in his eyes says Please! Someone fuck up and let me kill!

Gentry's eyes meet Leon's. Not here. Not now. Too many targets.

Fate intervenes. A teenage girl exits the women's room unaware of what's going on and startles Shotgun, who pivots and fires.

The round impacts near the girl. Gentry pulls his service revolver as Shotgun pumps another round into the chamber. Shotgun aims at the girl, enraged that she should expose his fear, as Gentry takes aim.

GENTRY

Police! Freeze!

Shotgun pivots and fires at Gentry in one instinctive motion. Gentry leaps behind a table as the shotgun round takes out the plate glass behind him, which shatters into ten thousand pieces.

Shotgun turns his weapon on Leon, who just now has cleared his service revolver. He drops like dead weight as, across the fast food restaurant, Gentry rises and fires twice -- Bang! Bang! to send Shotgun sprawling, but not before his last round flips Leon's hiding table away as if it were a tent flap in the wind.

Behind the counter, Handgun has witnessed the robbery turn to merde and grabs the register girl, retreating toward the rear exit as she screams for help.

Leon advances with his revolver as Shotgun, bloodied but not out, crawls toward his weapon. Leon cocks the revolver.

LEON

Move and you die, asshole!

Shotgun's eyes meet Leon's. His fingers are mere inches from the shotgun. He freezes.

Gentry leaps the counter the moment Handgun drags the girl out of the place. A second later he bursts through the door.

EXT. REAR OF FAST FOOD JOINT - DAY

Gentry explodes through the door, weapon readied, only to find the countergirl screaming hysterically and Handgun nowhere to be found.

GENTRY

Where is he? Where did he go?

The countergirl won't stop screaming, but gestures toward the back alley. Gentry takes off.

FOLLOW GENTRY & HANDGUN

running flat-out at opposite ends of an alley. Handgun pivots in full flight, sees Gentry sprinting toward him, and leaps laterally behind trash cans for cover.

Gentry sees Handgun's maneuver but continues forward, moving toward one side of the alley as Handgun rises and fires. Gentry dives for a hill of abandoned storage flats, rising once to return fire before moving closer.

Handgun rises and lays down a barrage of fire as he retreats down an intersecting alley. Gentry leaps for cover as the rounds impact where he stood moments before, then rises and paces after the retreating gunman.

ANOTHER ALLEY - FOLLOW THE ACTION

as Gentry turns into the alley and sees that it's a dead-end. Four and five story buildings make the wall of the alley, and at its end, a locked, gated fence. Gentry advances, service revolver held ready, looking left and right, a swinging motion, the rhythm of predator seeking prey.

A flattened cardboard box to one side moves an inch. Gentry aims his weapon at the box and advances.

GENTRY

Police officer! Throw out your
weapon!

A lizard squirms from beneath the box an instant before Handgun bursts from behind oil drums on the other side of the alley. He throws his empty gun at Gentry and explodes past him.

Gentry dodges the thrown gun, aims his revolver -- an easy shot.

GENTRY

Stop or I'll shoot!

Handgun is in full flight. He has no intention of stopping.

Gentry holsters his revolver and pursues.

Handgun hits a fence and is nearly over when Gentry's hands yank him down. Gentry has forty pounds of muscle on the kid, who responds to being manhandled by pulling a switchblade. His first swipe cuts Gentry's cheek. His second is stopped inches from penetrating Gentry's face. Gentry forces the knife-wielding arm back, breaks the kid's grip, then hits him square in the face. Bam! The kid goes down. Gentry straddles Handgun and continues pounding on him -- Bam!--Bam!--Bam! -- the violence a catharsis.

Leon, rushing up the alley, sees what's happening and moves to pull Gentry off the latino gang member.

LEON

Okay! Okay! You've got him, Pete!
You've got him!

GENTRY

You're under arrest, asshole!

Leon jerks Gentry free.

LEON

Okay! I think he knows that!

Gentry wants more of him and in coiled frustration pivots and marches down the alley as Leon cuffs the kid.

EXT. REAR OF FAST FOOD PLACE - DAY

Leon guides the manacled Handgun up the alley toward waiting black-and-whites and an ambulance. Gentry leans against his Porsche smoking a cigarette.

Leon turns Handgun over to two blue suits, gives them unheard instructions, then walks to Gentry as, nearby, Shotgun is loaded into the ambulance on a gurney.

LEON

Hey, you okay?

GENTRY

Yeah. I'm fine.

LEON

Usually it's you pulling me off
'em.

GENTRY

(flicking cigarette away)
Yeah, I blew it. Won't happen
again.
(sliding behind wheel)
I'll meet you at Ericksen's office
at four.

LEON

Sure. Four.

The Porsche's engine turns over and the instant it catches it
roars away.

Leon watches it go. Wondering what's become of his partner.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ERICKSEN OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Gentry's Porsche squeals to a stop behind Leon's very square,
very obvious unmarked police unit. Leon's leaning against
its side reading the Inquirer as Gentry trots up.

GENTRY

You still reading that shit?

LEON

You still don't get it, do ya?
(gesturing paper)
These guys are the best liars
going. You want to study lying
developed to an art, read --

Gentry has no time for this. Already moving for the
entrance:

GENTRY

What about LAX?

LEON

Nothin'. No rentals charged to
Ericksen's credit cards and only
three cash rentals all day
yesterday. You gotta have a
thousand dollars to rent a car
without a credit card, Pete.

GENTRY

He's not going to use paper with his name attached, that's for sure. Maybe it's a leased car. Maybe he bought one used and never re-registered it.

LEON

Maybe there aint no car.

Gentry ignores this. Then:

LEON

What about the cab companies?

GENTRY

Zip.

Leon continues inside. Gentry stops. Something across the street in front of a drug store has captured his attention. Adrienne Ericksen standing beside a cab she's just exited. Looking like she's about to break down. The sight stills him. Steeling herself, Adrienne enters the drug store and a moment later Gentry enters the office building.

INT. ERICKSEN BUILDING HALLWAY - DAY

The BUILDING MANAGER, an impeccably dressed man of 50, guides Leon and Gentry down a long corridor.

MANAGER

Used to lease that large suite up front on the left. You saw it when you came in. The travel agency is there now.

GENTRY

How long since he moved to the back?

MANAGER

Six months. Everyone's certain Mr. Ericksen's setback is only temporary. He's a first-class professional who always pays his rent on time, or in advance. Until recently, anyway.

LEON

He's behind in his rent?

The Manager's expression suggests he hates to mention this, but...

MANAGER

Two months in arrears. As of next week.

They arrive at the door. Painted on an opaque glass insert: Douglas Ericksen and Associates. The manager searches for a key on a large, old-fashioned key ring.

GENTRY

It's a one-man operation?

MANAGER

(opening the door)
He let his secretary go last month.

INT. ERICKSEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Expensive business footage, but packed with too much furniture, stacks of files, unhung pictures and certificates. Organizational despair.

Gentry and Leon share a look. Oh shit...

Ever the rental professional, the Manager moves for a window.

MANAGER

Here. Let me get some air in here.

Leon begins thumbing through files stacked on a cabinet.

GENTRY

Where's the safe?

MANAGER

It's embedded in the floor. There. Behind the desk.

GENTRY

(looking)
Do you have the combination?

MANAGER

(officious)
No, of course not. Tenants make their own arrangements regarding the floor safe. If I had my way they would have been yanked out years ago. They're altogether too much bother. First of all, they're a security risk. Second--

GENTRY

Fine. There'll be someone in later
to drill it.

Gentry and Leon are already pouring over files and it's a moment before the Manager realizes he's been dismissed.

LATER

On the desk amid file folders, a medium pizza box and a styrofoam container of half-eaten salad, the fork still stuck in its middle.

Leon sits behind the desk with a folder open before him; Gentry stands near the door, another file folder opened in his hands.

A technician kneels over the safe. The drill whines in his hands.

Leon closes his file.

LEON

Jesus. This guy was in deep.
Either he had a lot of money and
didn't mind losing it, or he was
playing with somebody's else's
scratch.

Gentry drops his folder in front of Leon.

GENTRY

Have a look at this. He was kiting
funds from one investment account
to another trying to cover his
losses.

The drill whine stops.

DRILLER

That's it. She's open.

He pulls the safe open. A moment later Gentry lifts the cache basket from the safe.

DRILLER

(holding out form)
Somebody want to sign this?

Leon signs it as Gentry quickly goes through the documents in the basket: A small stack of 20s paper-clipped together, various mortgage and lease contracts, and an insurance packet. Gentry flips to the back page. Two items stick out: \$2.000.000.00 and Beneficiary: Douglas Ericksen and/or Adrienne Ericksen.

EXT. ERICKSEN'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Gentry closes the driver's door of Leon's unmarked car and leans down.

LEON

(fingering reasons)

Okay. We got motive. Ericksen was desperate for money and he had a two million dollar survivor's benefit insurance policy. We got opportunity. His wife home alone on a deserted stretch of beach. All we need is method.

GENTRY

Wait a second! Wait! Wait! All we need is method? Now you're sure the husband set her up?

LEON

I aint sure o'nothin'. I'm just saying we can wrap this sucker up if we play our cards right.

Leon starts his engine.

GENTRY

Find Ericksen's rental car, Leon.

The sedan pulls away from the curb.

Gentry watches Leon's car diminish down the street, then glances back at the still-open pharmacy across the street. He makes for it.

INT. PHARMACY - NIGHT

Gentry approaches the prescription desk. A woman clerk moves up from stocking shelves to attend him.

PHARMACY CLERK

Yes, may I help you?

GENTRY

There was a woman who filled a prescription here this afternoon. I'd like to know what it was.

PHARMACY CLERK

That's privileged infor --

Gentry shows her his police badge.

PHARMACY CLERK

What's her name?

GENTRY

Adrienne Ericksen.

PHARMACY CLERK

One moment...

A FEW MOMENTS LATER

the clerk returns.

PHARMACY CLERK

Fifty capsules of Seconal. It's a sedative. She had her doctor increase the dosage to a hundred milligrams each.

GENTRY

Thanks.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Gentry steps inside the glass enclosure, fishes a coin out and dials. A moment later he hears Adrienne's phone answering machine.

ADRIENNE'S VOICE

You've reached the home of Douglas and Adrienne Ericksen. We can't come to the phone right now...

INT. ADRIENNE'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The place is dark. On a small antique desk Adrienne's answering machine is working.

ADRIENNE'S VOICE

-- but if you'll leave your name and your number, and the time you called, Douglas or I will get back to you as quickly as possible.

Adrienne. Across the room. Tear-filled eyes. Surveying darkness.

GENTRY'S VOICE

Mrs. Ericksen... Adrienne. This is Pete Gentry. I know you're going through a difficult time right now. If you should need some help, or someone to talk to, feel free to call me. My number is 213-995-7277... 'Night.

Adrienne has not moved.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Gentry lowers the phone to its cradle, thoughtful a long moment before he pivots and moves for his car still parked across the street.

EXT./INT. GENTRY'S PORSCHE - NIGHT

Gentry paces the car, taking corners on two wheels and generally pushing city driving to the hilt.

INT. GENTRY'S APARTMENT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Gentry paces down the hall. He fishes for his keys. The next door down opens. Linda steps out. She's wearing a shirt. Probably his. One button joined. And nothing else.

LINDA

Pete?

Gentry takes one look at her. Yes.

LINDA

Pete, about last night. I'm sorry. About putting you in that situation, I mean.

Gentry puts his keys away, walks to her. His intense stare ignites more words:

LINDA

I just... wanted to see you and that other guy -- I don't know how it happened, really. I mean, I was thinking of you when...

His thumbs trail down each side of the shirt to the only button. In one swift, powerful jolt he yanks her to him, snapping the button and pinning her naked body to him.

Gentry kisses her long and hard, then reaches up behind and under the shirt, lifts her off the ground and carries her into her apartment, their lips still joined.

INT. LINDA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

The door closes behind them. Linda's feet still dangle inches from the floor. Gentry peels the shirt from her body with one hand. She is completely naked. Still they kiss. The shirt drops to the floor.

LATER

Both naked now, Linda's legs have Gentry in a scissor-lock as he spins her around and around the apartment. She squeals with delight.

LATER YET

Linda lies face-down on the bed as Gentry, out of shot, pounds her in rhythmic succession. Linda's cries rise to a crescendo.

LATER EVEN YET

Linda and Gentry lie on her bed. She's asleep. Gentry's cigarette ash glows, casting them in brief amber light, then dies. In the instant of its radiance Gentry's troubled face burns in brilliant clarity. Linda is not Adrienne.

Gentry snaps up, frustrated and angry. Linda turns over, fully asleep, and does not see him get dressed and leave.

INT. GENTRY'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gentry enters still buttoning his shirt. He takes a bottle of beer from the fridge, pries its cap off, and drinks thirstily. The blinking light of his phone answering machine beckons from across the room.

A moment later, he rewinds the tape, turns it to replay.

ADRIENNE'S VOICE

(troubled)

Sergeant Gentry... I wanted to tell you... I want you to understand that it has nothing to do with you. It's me. It's... After Douglas and what's happened, I just don't know... what there is to live for any more...

(MORE)

ADRIENNE'S VOICE (cont'd)

(long silence)

I just want to tell you that --

But before this last sentence is completed Gentry is running for the door.

EXT./INT. GENTRY'S PORSCHE - NIGHT

Gentry drives like a madman.

EXT. ERICKSEN HOUSE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Gentry's Porsche skids to an angled stop before the driveway. He leaps from the car, leaving the driver's door agape behind him.

EXT. SIDE OF ERICKSEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Gentry runs down the walk to the side door and knocks quickly. When there is no answer, he knocks again before:

GENTRY

Mrs. Ericksen? Mrs. Ericksen?
Adrienne!

Gentry kicks. The door whips open. Gentry charges in.

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Adrienne sits at the kitchen table before a small mountain of pills. Trails of recent tears mark her face. Gentry is stunned by the sight of her. This lovely woman looks near death.

For moments neither can say anything. Finally:

ADRIENNE

I couldn't...
(tearfully)
I just couldn't...

Gentry rushes to her and pulls her into an embrace. He holds her close. She begins to sob into his chest. Finally he sweeps her up into his arms and moves for the stairs.

INT. ADRIENNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gentry puts her into her bed, then pulls the covers up. He shuts off the lights before taking a chair beside her:

GENTRY

It's okay. I won't leave you.

Adrienne's amazed eyes remain on him awhile. Then sleep.

LATER

Gentry awakens in the chair and starts when he finds Adrienne gone. He spins -- and sees her standing in the shadows.

Adrienne has showered. She wears a bathrobe and her hair is combed back and still wet. She just looks at Gentry as he steps to her side. Finally:

ADRIENNE
This isn't right.

GENTRY
He tried to murder you, Mrs. Erick--

ADRIENNE
Addie.

GENTRY
He tried to kill you, Addie. For the insurance. He was in deep. Kiting money from one account to another to keep things covered. He was a no good son of a bitch and he
--

She touches his lips, shushing him.

ADRIENNE
I can't trust my feelings for tomorrow, but --

Her eyes engage his, searching for a sign that he understands.

ADRIENNE
I want you. Now.

She pulls on the robe cinch and it loosens. The robe falls to the floor. Gentry takes in her exquisite nakedness. She reaches up to him, kissing, caressing, gently undoing buttons.

A MONTAGE OF LOVE-MAKING

Fingertips caress. Lips hover, then sensuously kiss flesh. Moist lips meet and part, creating a bridge of their juices. Sweat gathers, then rolls languorously across taut skin. Fingers entwine, release, tighten. Adrienne gasps. Gentry tenses. The moment arrives.

LATER

Now it is Gentry who sleeps as Adrienne studies him, gently caressing his brow. Finally, she smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ADRIENNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Just after dawn. Addie remains on her side studying him as Gentry awakens. At first disoriented, it takes a moment for Gentry to realize he's died and gone to heaven. Beneath this sheet is one beautiful, naked woman. He grins. Then:

GENTRY

What time is it?

ADRIENNE

A little after six. Sleep well?

GENTRY

Like a vampire in a blood bank.

Addie grins. She begins to caress his shoulder and chest. Proprietary.

ADRIENNE

So what now... Officer?

GENTRY

I've got to get this case wrapped up.

Her hands explore down below the sheet, gently caressing. For Gentry, her touch is an aphrodisiac. As she touches him:

ADRIENNE

I thought you said you had it wrapped up?

GENTRY

Well, there are some procedural things left. We've got to document each step your husband took that night. The only things missing are the rental car and his return ticket to San Francisco. Until then, officially at least, the case stays open and you remain a suspect. And --

A wrenching motion, Adrienne rolls herself back on top of him. Flesh-to-flesh, eye-to-eye:

ADRIENNE
(finishing for him)
It's bad form to screw a suspect.

GENTRY
(a slow grin)
Yeah.

Bad form.

CUT TO:

INT. SQUAD ROOM - A MONTAGE - GENTRY & LEON

work the phones... type reports... other cops around using the phones too... nobody around but Gentry and Leon... clothes disheveled... feet propped up on the table... sitting straight... Leon staples papers together, leaves with them... returns and mans a phone again... time passing... shit work is boring... Finally:

THE SAME SCENE - GENTRY,

lodging a phone to his ear with a shoulder, taps out a beat on the table-top with a pencil. He's on hold. Leon enters with several cups of steaming liquid. One of them is coffee. He sets it in front of Gentry, then unpackages and drops a tea bag into his hot water.

Gentry sits up straight.

GENTRY
Uh-huh... You're sure they checked all the alleys?... Well, I don't know. A rental car, probably. Something nondescript... Okay... No, leave it up another day.
(hangs up)
It's been seventy two hours. If the car's there, it should have shown up by now.
(beat)
We could file the report without the rental car.

LEON
The DA'll raise hell.

GENTRY
Fuck him.

A Blue Suit leans in the doorway.

BLUE SUIT

Hey, Gentry, there's a woman here
to see you. A Mrs. Ericksen.

Gentry freezes. Leon barks a laugh. After a moment:

GENTRY

Okay. Show her in.

LEON

Jesus, Pete, nice goin'. Play your
cards right, you can slice off a
piece of that.

When Gentry ignores him:

LEON

I saw the way you looked at her the
other night! What happened? You
went out there to get her statement
and she looked back, right?

GENTRY

(softly)
Shut the fuck up, Leon.

The Blue Suit leads Addie to the door. She's gorgeous in an
ordinary, every-day pantsuit. Gentry meets her at the door
and questions her with his eyes. What are you doing here?

GENTRY

Mrs. Ericksen, I'm kinda surprised
to see you here.

Her expression flutters a brief recognition as Gentry guides
her inside.

GENTRY

Can I get you something? Coffee?
A soft drink?

ADRIENNE

No, thank you.
(to Leon)
Officer -- ? I'm sorry. I've
forgotten your name.

LEON

Kessler. Detective Kessler.

ADRIENNE

Good afternoon, Detective.

LEON

Good afternoon, Mrs. Ericksen.

For a brief, awkward moment it's as if no one knows how to proceed. Then:

GENTRY

What brings you here to the station, Mrs. Ericksen?

Addie gives both men a brief look before:

ADRIENNE

Well, I decided to pay some bills. Keep my mind occupied. Stay busy. Anyway, I found something in our receipts. Something odd.

She gives Leon a credit card receipt who peruses it briefly before handing it over to Gentry.

GENTRY

It's just a Chevron credit card receipt. I don't understand the significance--

ADRIENNE

Look at the box for the license plate number. You know, at some gas stations they write down the license plate number.

Gentry glances at the receipt.

GENTRY

Uh-huh...

ADRIENNE

This one isn't for our car.

Gentry and Leon share a look. Not her license plate number?

ADRIENNE

I don't know if it means anything. I just thought it was strange, that's all. It's dated just last week and--

Gentry picks up the phone and dials. When Adrienne questions this with a look:

LEON

This could be the break we've been waiting for.

EXT. POLICE IMPOUND LOT - DAY

Gentry's Porsche scoots through the driveway.

EXT. IMPOUND LOT YARD - DAY

Gentry is out of the car and heading for the office before Leon can struggle from the low Porsche.

A clerk in oily jeans and t-shirt exits the office. Gentry badges him.

GENTRY

LAPD. Where's the Chrysler you just brought it?

IMPOUND CLERK

(gestures)

Over there.

GENTRY

Is it locked?

IMPOUND CLERK

Yeah.

GENTRY

We'll need a slim-jim.

AT THE CHRYSLER - GENTRY & LEON

wait as the clerk approaches with a slim-jim. Gentry takes it from him and expertly "pops" the passenger door lock. Using a kerchief to protect any fingerprints, he opens the glove compartment. A moment later he hands a packet to Leon holding it by its edge: Airline tickets.

Leon opens the packet on the hood of the car using a retracted pen to hold the pages extended. Meanwhile Gentry finds another document in the glove compartment: Pink slip.

LEON

Airline tickets made out to a Phil Golden. Round trip from San Francisco International to LAX and back. One of 'em expended on the night of the 14th.

Gentry slides out of the car. He is already slipping the pink slip into a clear plastic evidence bag.

GENTRY

I was right. He didn't rent a car.
He bought it.

(gestures pink slip)

Signed over by the seller two
months ago. All he had to do was
resell the car without registering
it and there would be no record he
ever owned it.

LEON

Careful, wasn't he?

GENTRY

Not careful enough.

Gentry gives Leon another evidence bag. Leon inserts the tickets as:

GENTRY

Pop the trunk.

Leon leans inside and taps the trunk solenoid. The trunk lid rises. Gentry back-tracks to look in the trunk and Leon follows him. As they peruse its every-day contents:

GENTRY

Wraps it up.

LEON

(not satisfied)

Yeah, I guess so...

Seeing Leon's reluctance:

GENTRY

What's the matter?

LEON

Nothing. Nothing's the matter.

GENTRY

Bullshit.

LEON

If you were married to Adrienne
Ericksen, could you bring yourself
to kill her? Just for money?

(MORE)

LEON (cont'd)

He could have found an easier way
to turn a buck than by murdering
his wife for the insurance money...
Now if there was another reason...
like a girlfriend... now that I
could believe.

Gentry pauses, considers. Then smiles at his partner.

GENTRY

I don't buy a girlfriend

Leon gives him a look that asks, "Oh?"

GENTRY

With a wife like her at home, who
needs another woman?

LEON

(big grin)

Hey, people always want what they
don't got. Guy has a beautiful
woman at home, he goes out and
sleeps with dogs, the ugliest women
he can find. Or maybe he wants a
brunette or a redhead 'cause the
little woman is a blond.

GENTRY

I still don't buy it.

LEON

That's from your perspective
because she's something you don't
got.

Gentry slams the trunk. A little too hard. Turns back to
Leon.

GENTRY

So what are you saying? You're
saying we should look for an
accomplice, Ericksen's girlfriend?

Leon considers it for a moment. Finally:

LEON

Nah.

(gestures bags)

This shit's too good. Let's file
this sucker and forget about it.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Gentry pounds away at an old manual typewriter, finishing the Ericksen case report.

Leon sits nearby going through their previous reports. He stops. Something is bothering him. He picks up the phone and dials.

INT. TRAVEL AGENCY - DAY

LESTER FENADY, early 30s, a handsome, well-groomed man who takes great pride in his appearance, picks up the phone.

LESTER

Les Fenady. May I help you?

-INTERCUT LESTER AND LEON TALKING ON THE PHONE

LEON

Detective Kessler, Mr. Fenady. Los Angeles Police Department. Do you remember selling a round-trip ticket to San Francisco on the tenth of this month?

LESTER

I sell a lot of tickets, officer. If you can give me a ticket number, I'll bring it up on the computer. Maybe it'll ring a bell.

LEON

(reading)

One "D," as in dog, four nine seven one six six three.

LESTER

Hold on.

Lester taps the numbers into his console. A moment later the information comes up onto the screen. Lester studies it a moment before:

LESTER

Oh, yeah. I remember this one. Paid in cash.

LEON

Think you could identify him?

LESTER

No.

LEON

I thought you said you remembered --

LESTER

It wasn't a man. It was a woman.
And she I can identify. As a
matter of fact, I'd like to, if it
meant I could see her again.

RESUME SQUAD ROOM - LEON

lowers the phone and looks over at Gentry, who's pounding
away at the manual typewriter. Finally:

LEON

Hey, Pete. Stop.

GENTRY

(still typing)
What is it?

LEON

The case isn't closed. I got a guy
here who says he can identify
Ericksen's accomplice. His
girlfriend.

Leon grins. Gentry stops and looks at Leon as he returns the
phone receiver to his ear. Girlfriend?

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. POLICE COMPUTER STATION ROOM - DAY

Lester Fenady sits beside a COMPUTER OPERATOR who inputs his
comments. A woman's face is beginning to take shape on the
screen.

LESTER

No, her chin isn't so pointed.

COMPUTER OPERATOR

You mean like this?

He taps in a few commands. The girl's chin becomes less
pointed.

LESTER

Yeah, that's more like it.

LATER

Across the room, Gentry stands watching the laser printer spit out the first hard copy. It slides into a wire basket. Gentry picks it up, looks at it:

Adrienne. Different hair. Different make-up. Almost a honky-tonk version of Adrienne, but almost certainly her nonetheless. Gentry covers her hair. The resemblance is more striking.

COMPUTER OPERATOR'S VOICE

Anybody you know?

Gentry spins, startled by the Operator's unintentional stealth.

GENTRY

What?

He's kidding, but he asks it again:

COMPUTER OPERATOR

Anybody you know?

GENTRY

(not convincing)

No, I don't think so.

Leon moves up behind Gentry as the computer operator leaves and stares past him at the artist's depiction in his hands.

LEON

Looks like I was wrong.

GENTRY

What do you mean?

LEON

About Ericksen's girlfriend.

GENTRY

(dry throat)

Oh? How's that?

LEON

She's no dog.

Gentry continues to stare at the drawing as Leon crosses the room to retrieve his jacket from the back of a chair.

LEON

Hey, Pete. I'm goin' home. You
wanna Xerox that for R&I?

From across the room, Leon realizes that Gentry hasn't moved.
He gives him a quizzical look before:

LEON

Hey, you hear me? I said --

GENTRY

Sure. I'll do it.

LEON

See ya tomorrow.

GENTRY

Right. Tomorrow.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Gentry watches copy after copy of the sketch slide out of the
photocopy machine, images of Adrienne, one after another. He
scoops up a dozen and makes for a desk.

Gentry draws a new hairstyle onto one of the copies, alters
the make-up look with a few nervous scrawls... and sits back.

LATER

Half of the sketches have been altered by Gentry's inexpert
hand. No matter how many times you ask the question, the
answer's the same: Adrienne.

He dumps all of the copies into a briefcase and shuts it.

EXT./INT. GENTRY'S PORSCHE - DAY

He powers the metal beast down the Coast Highway.

EXT. ADRIENNE'S DRIVEWAY & HOUSE - DAY

The Porsche rolls to a stop in the gravel. Gentry slides out
slowly. Weighted down. Pulling the briefcase out of the
car, Gentry makes for the walkway leading to the side door.

For a long moment Gentry stands before the door, indecisive.
Finally he enters.

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - DAY

Gentry enters. No one home, apparently. He sets the briefcase down on the counter, moves for the sliding door.

EXT. ERICKSEN HOUSE BEACH DECK - DAY

Addie lies sunbathing on a lounge. Gentry appears at the sliding door and takes her in a moment before he exits. He walks to the rail, looks out to sea.

ADRIENNE
Is something wrong?

GENTRY
No. Nothing.

Addie rises, moves up behind Gentry and begins to massage his neck and shoulders. Fighting it, Gentry finds the massage nonetheless wonderful.

ADRIENNE
I think you could use a drink.

GENTRY
Yeah.

ADRIENNE
Come inside.

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE

Adrienne moves for the liquor cabinet. Gentry watches her a moment before:

GENTRY
We found the car.

Addie faces him. Radiating happiness.

ADRIENNE
Then it's over! This whole ugly
mess is behind us!

Gentry looks at the briefcase on the counter. Can't tell her the truth. Finally:

GENTRY
Yeah. It's over.

Adrienne sees Gentry's brief look at the briefcase. She takes his arm and leads him toward the stairs.

ADRIENNE

You look beat. Why don't you go upstairs and take a shower... No, I have a better idea. Why don't we go upstairs and take a shower?

She kisses him. Gentry tries to respond, but cannot. Then:

GENTRY

Addie?... Did you ever suspect your husband of having a mistress?

The question causes a quake somewhere deep inside her. She conceals it.

ADRIENNE

No. Why do you ask?

GENTRY

No reason.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Addie releases Gentry just inside the door and goes to turn on the water in the shower. Steam billows over the top of the glass wall before she returns and begins to unbutton and unfasten his clothes.

He stops her.

GENTRY

No... No, look, you go ahead. I just want to relax for a little while. Unwind. I'll take a shower later.

Only momentarily disappointed:

ADRIENNE

Have it your own way.

She takes several steps toward the shower, then spins and loosens the robe tie.

ADRIENNE

Just so you know what you're missing.

The robe falls to the floor. She grins, turns and walks to and inside the shower. Gentry watches her go. Unable to look away. Smitten. Chained. Only after the shower door closes does he retreat from the bathroom.

INT. ADRIENNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Gentry stops in the doorway from the bathroom and takes in the room. Gentry quickly peruses the top of Adrienne's vanity, noting ironically her brand of perfume, Deceit, before moving to her desk.

At the desk Gentry takes one look over his shoulder at the open bathroom door. Steam still rises, billowing out. Gentry sits, thinks about it a moment, then pulls open the drawer. He finds Adrienne's appointment and address book.

He opens it, begins going down the list. First page: Nothing. Second: No. Third...

Adrienne grabs him from behind! She cups his eyes and laughs, her naked, soapy body staining his clothes. Gentry twists and the appointment/address book tumbles to the floor. Addie falls into his arms, unaware or uncaring about the book. For a long moment he holds her, their eyes locked. His eyes take in her wet, exquisite body. She begins to unbutton his shirt, then rips it open in frustration, kissing his chest and nipples.

ADRIENNE

(between kisses)

Pete, I'm sorry... so sorry, I...
can't... help... it... I...
want... you... to... Oh!

Gentry's reserve breaks like a cracked dam. He stands and yanks her up into his arms and carries her to the bed. She crashes onto it but is up in an instant to undo his pants.

MOMENTS LATER

their naked bodies writhe in unleashed lust. Addie cries in pleasure and sweet pain as Gentry grabs her great mane of hair, riding forward like a charging warrior.

LATER EVEN YET

they lie entwined, lovers whose last drop of passion has been spent on the other.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ADRIENNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gentry lies sleeping. Addie studies him. She rises, careful not to awaken him, slips on a robe and moves for the door.

KITCHEN - ADRIENNE

enters the kitchen, where Gentry left his briefcase. She snaps the second lock out, then opens the case. Inside are the copies of the computer-generated sketch. Startled, Addie turns on a light and studies the sketches, each with a different scribble to make it look more like her.

At the bottom of each picture is printed (by computer) Description of ticket purchaser by Lester Fenady.

Startled by a noise behind her, Adrienne shuts the case and spins around... only to find her cat, Buttermilk, meowing for attention. She kneels to pet Buttermilk.

Just then Gentry enters the kitchen. She starts.

GENTRY

What are you doing?

ADRIENNE

Oh!... I couldn't sleep. I just came down for a drink. What about you? Can I get you something?

GENTRY

No thanks.

Adrienne moves for the door. Looking back over her shoulder:

ADRIENNE

You coming?

GENTRY

I'll be there in a minute.

Adrienne leaves. Gentry opens the briefcase. The sketch of Adrienne/look-alike sits on top of a pile of papers. Did she see the sketch?, a worried look at the door asks. Gentry closes the case and spins the combination locks.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Addie and Gentry sit across the breakfast table from one another. Each eats quietly. Inner thoughts. Tension. Gentry's beeper goes off. He stands, taps a number into the wall phone.

GENTRY

Gentry here.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Leon sits on the communal desk. A multi-page phone bill is spread out before him.

LEON

Pete, I've been going over
Ericksen's phone bill. I think I
found something.

-INTERCUT WITH GENTRY

GENTRY

(eyeing Adrienne)
What?

LEON

Calls made from his Beverly Hills
office to a residence in San Pedro.
All of them made after seven p.m.
and all made on a week-night, most
of them Tuesdays, Wednesdays or
Thursdays.

GENTRY

His mistress.

LEON

Bingo.

GENTRY

Got an address?

EXT. ADRIENNE'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Gentry paces toward his car. The moment he slides behind the wheel and turns the key in the ignition, Adrienne strolls from the walkway to watch him go. The Porsche's starting motor drones, the cold engine almost catches, then dies. Gentry tries it again. It dies again.

GENTRY

Piece of shit!

ADRIENNE

Want me to call Triple-A?

GENTRY

No. It's cold, that's all.

The engine catches. Gentry throws it in reverse and the Porsche screeches out of the driveway.

EXT. SAN PEDRO APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Gentry's Porsche is parked in front along with two black-and-whites and Leon's unmarked car.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY - DAY

Two uniformed cops stand outside the door as Gentry enters.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gentry finds LASZLO KINSKI, late 30s, a lean and intelligent man who speaks with a faint Eastern European accent, "dusting" a table.

GENTRY
Hey, Laszlo. Where's Leon?

LASZLO
(without looking up)
Bedroom.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Gentry enters and finds Leon nearly engulfed by clothes in the wall closet.

GENTRY
Leon.

LEON
Hey, Pete.

Leon has found something.

LEON
Look at this.

He opens a suit coat displaying a label. Reading:

LEON
Hand-made for Douglas Ericksen by
Cleve and Sons, London Tailors.

Gentry takes one look at the label before:

GENTRY
Bingo.

The coat lands on the bed.

LATER

There are now two nearly equal piles of clothing on the bed, half suits and sportcoats, the other half dresses and blouses. Gentry tosses the last jacket as Leon checks the last dress. Nothing.

LEON

Look at this shit! This isn't Paris originals shit; this is K-Mart shit! I don't get it. Ericksen was a classy guy, right? But this broad dresses like she's on welfare. Something else bothers me. There's nothing personal here. No family pictures. No phone books or old mail or just plain crap she couldn't bring herself to throw away.

GENTRY

Maybe there isn't anything she can't throw away.

LEON

That would make her a strange woman, all right.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gentry enters to find Laszlo "dusting" one side of a vanity table too large for the bedroom.

GENTRY

So how's it look?

LASZLO

Pretty clean.

Gentry turns his attention to the opposite side of the table where several dozen perfume and lotion bottles are arranged.

GENTRY

You done here?

LASZLO

Yeah. Nothing.

One bottle beckons: Deceit. The same scent Adrienne wears. Gentry stares at it a long moment before picking it up. It remains in his hand, a symbol for something far more important, until:

LASZLO

That's pretty good stuff. My girlfriend uses it.

Startled, Gentry composes himself before:

GENTRY

Yeah, so does Ericksen's wife.

Something catches Gentry's attention, a fold of thick paper wedged behind the vanity table. He kneels, slips his hand under the table and pulls the paper out: A take-out menu from a Greek restaurant, Alexander's.

Gentry studies the menu's logo. This is the first personal clue found in "Marta's" apartment.

EXTERIOR DAY - A POINT OF VIEW: TRAVEL AGENCY

looking through the plate glass window as Lester Fenady tosses a wave to an assistant and leaves.

Fenady climbs into a new Mazda RX7 parked in front. The car pulls into traffic.

The point of view follows him...

POINT OF VIEW: FENADY'S HOUSE

WE WATCH Fenady's RX7 pull into the garage, the WE GLIDE BY down-the street.

POINT OF VIEW: LOOKING THROUGH THE FRONT WINDOW

as Fenady enters the house and unbuttons his shirt as he walks toward the phone. An instant later Fenady has dialed the phone. He grins, obviously talking to someone very intimate. Still grinning, he hangs up, goes to the door and unlocks it.

THE MOVING POINT OF VIEW

navigates around the side of the house through the bushes to the REAR DECK, watching as Fenady, wearing only a towel, exits the house while pulling the cork out of a bottle of champagne. He drops the bottle into an ice bucket, slips a cassette into a nearby boom box, yanks the towel free and slides into a steaming hot tub.

THE POINT OF VIEW MOVES CLOSER

as Fenady, oblivious to this intruder, pours himself a glass of champagne and settles back for a little hedonistic pleasure.

Gloved hands -- those of this intruder -- reach out and lift the boom box over the back of Fenady's head. Still plugged in, the box drops into the water. Fenady's spasmodic body almost leaps from the tub. But he settles back into the frothy mass of water, boiling like a two-minute egg.

EXT. SAN PEDRO APARTMENT POOL - DAY

Gentry and Leon wait as the apartment manager, MR. ZAZEL, 56, a Lithuanian emigre to America, stares at the police sketch of Adrienne/look-alike. Finally:

ZAZEL

Yes, this is her. She live here, oh -- four month. Maybe five. She pay cash. Always cash.

GENTRY

Did she give any references?

ZAZEL

No. No references. Just cash.

LEON

Did she have any visitors? Anyone you might remember?

ZAZEL

There was man, big man. Maybe boyfriend. He come visit.

Leon produces the coroner's photograph of Ericksen.

LEON

Was this the man?

Zazel takes it from Leon's hand and studies it before:

ZAZEL

Not sure. Maybe.

A uniformed cop steps up.

UNIFORMED COP

Sergeant Gentry?

GENTRY

Yeah.

UNIFORMED COP

I just got a call for you about a witness, a guy named Fenady?

GENTRY

What about him?

UNIFORMED COP

He's dead.

INT. FENADY'S HOUSE - DAY

Gentry, Leon and a bulbous cop, FATCOP, pace through Fenady's house.

FATCOP

His girl friend found him, say one-thirty. She came over and there he was floating in the tub.

LEON

Homicide dejour.

FATCOP

Accidental death. Clear and simple. Don't you guys try and fuck up my case load.

GENTRY

Shit. Hate to do that.

EXT. REAR DECK OF FENADY'S HOUSE - DAY

Fatcop leads Gentry and Leon through Fenady's back door to the deck. Fenady's naked body floats in the tub. The cassette player, its cord still plugged into a nearby floor socket, is wedged between his flesh and the tub side.

LEON

(eyeing body)

I think he's done.

FATCOP

Cute.

GENTRY

You should know Fenady was a witness in an on-going homicide investigation.

FATCOP

That the way you guys see this?
Homicide? I see accidental death.

Gentry kneels to have a closer look at the boom box.

GENTRY

How do you figure?

FATCOP

He's in the tub. He reaches over
there --

(gestures table)
to change the channel and --

GENTRY

There's a cassette in the player.

FATCOP

Okay, then, change the cassette. He
touches the boom box, it shorts out
and he can't let go. He drags it
into the tub and fries.

LEON

Not fry. Poach, maybe, but not
fry.

A MOMENT LATER

Gentry and Leon make their way to the door.

LEON

Okay, maybe it was an accident.

GENTRY

Maybe.

LEON

Or maybe Ericksen's girlfriend is
trying to get rid of any witnesses.
Fenady could have tied her to the
attempted murder of Mrs. Ericksen.

GENTRY

Maybe.

LEON

I could believe it myself except
for one thing.

GENTRY

What's that?

LEON

How did she find out about Fenady?
How'd she get his address?

But Gentry's mind is too occupied with dark thoughts for him to respond. Adrienne. The police sketch. Then:

LEON

You know what I think? I think the girlfriend was the brains behind Ericksen. She's the one who talked him into trying to kill his wife... I think we got one smart, crazy bitch out there.

EXT. ADRIENNE'S BEACH HOUSE DECK - NIGHT

Gentry stands at the rail staring out to sea. The door slides open behind him. Addie steps out with two wind-shielded candles and places them on the dining table that's been set up on the deck. She lights each candle, then turns to look at Gentry. Sensing his emotional distance, she comes up behind him, loops her arms through his, then circles him for a kiss. His lips are as cold as marble. Adrienne draws back.

ADRIENNE

There's something on your mind.
What is it?

Gentry doesn't answer, continues staring out to sea.

ADRIENNE

Won't you tell me -- ?

GENTRY

Where were you today?

ADRIENNE

What do you mean?

GENTRY

Answer the question. Where were you today?

ADRIENNE

Here. There.

Gentry turns the cold steel of his eyes on her. Suddenly frightened, Adrienne draws away from him.

ADRIENNE

I went to the market.

GENTRY
When?

ADRIENNE
Pete, I --

Closing in on her:

GENTRY
When?

ADRIENNE
Three thirty. Four.

GENTRY
What were you doing earlier?

ADRIENNE
What time?

GENTRY
Early afternoon. Around one.

Gentry's tone is that of a prosecutor. Adrienne is almost in tears.

ADRIENNE
I went for a walk.

GENTRY
Where?

ADRIENNE
Here. On the beach.

GENTRY
Any witnesses?

ADRIENNE
Witnesses? No, I... No! Pete,
tell me what's going on!

He stares into her eyes for a long moment. Then:

GENTRY
You're telling me you don't know?

ADRIENNE
That's right. That's what I'm
telling you.

GENTRY

I asked you if your husband had a girlfriend, remember? Remember what you said?

ADRIENNE

Yes.

GENTRY

I spent some time in San Pedro today. Know anything about San Pedro, Adrienne?

ADRIENNE

No. Why do you ask?

GENTRY

It's where your husband's girlfriend lives.

ADRIENNE

(stunned)

What are you talking about?!

GENTRY

You're telling me you didn't know he had a girlfriend? IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME?

ADRIENNE

Pete, I... I...

He says nothing. Waits. She's shaking, the tears coming now.

ADRIENNE

Her name's Marta. I don't know her last name. She knew Douglas before... before he and I... The first time we met, Douglas said I reminded him of someone. Except I was prettier, he said. I asked him about her, but he wouldn't tell me anything, except that it was all over. She left him for another man, that's all he would say. And then four, maybe five months ago...

GENTRY

He started seeing her again. Did he tell you?

ADRIENNE

No... She did! She's crazy, Pete.
She came to the house! She was
scary. Weird! She threatened me!

Sobbing now, Adrienne can't go on. She flinches at his touch.

GENTRY

And then what?

ADRIENNE

I moved out. I went to a hotel. I
told Douglas he had to choose
between us. I couldn't live that
way. And he... and he chose me...
I thought.

GENTRY

Why didn't you tell me any of this?

ADRIENNE

I... It was too painful. Like
opening an old wound. I didn't
want you to know because... just
being a part of it made me feel
dirty. I wanted to start fresh.
With you.

Gentry studies her in silence before:

GENTRY

He said you reminded him of Marta.
Did he say why?

ADRIENNE

The time I saw her I knew why. It
was really uncanny, she looked so
much like me. We could have been
sisters.

Adrienne wipes tears from her eyes and tries to compose herself.

ADRIENNE

Why were you asking me those
questions about what I did today?
(when he doesn't answer)
Something's happened... TELL ME,
DAMN IT!

Gentry considers it a long moment making up his mind, then pulls a folded Xerox of Adrienne/look-alike from his pocket and gives it to her.

GENTRY

Is that Marta?

Stunned and fearful even in the presence of Marta's likeness, Adrienne gestures yes.

ADRIENNE

What did she do?

GENTRY

We think she's your husband's accomplice. She helped him set up an alibi.

ADRIENNE

That's all?

Gentry almost doesn't answer. Then:

GENTRY

No. There was a man who could have identified her. He died today. It may have been homicide.

ADRIENNE

Oh my god...

Gentry takes the drawing from her hands, looks at it.

GENTRY

She looks a lot like you.

ADRIENNE

Yes, I know...

(realizing)

You think... thought it was me!

GENTRY

I didn't know what to think.

Adrienne turns from him and buries her face in her hands, crying. Gentry turns her about, pulls her into his arms.

ADRIENNE

Oh, Pete, I'm scared... What if she comes after me?

GENTRY

She won't. I won't let her.

And the way he says it, the kind of guy he is, she believes it totally. They kiss.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ERICKSEN DRIVEWAY - NEXT MORNING

Gentry turns the Porsche engine over. Adrienne watches from the gate holding her robe shut with folded hands. The starter motor drones on, without effect. Finally:

ADRIENNE

I could call someone.

Frustrated, Gentry crawls out of the Porsche.

GENTRY

No time. I'll get a cab.

ADRIENNE

You can take my car.

EXT./INT. MERCEDES - DAY

Gentry slips behind the wheel of Adrienne's Mercedes. The engine catches immediately.

Gentry guides the luxury car out onto the Coast Highway, then up-Sunset Boulevard. Deciding to see what this baby can do, he checks the rear-view mirror, sees no one, then floors it. The Mercedes bolts forward.

Gentry settles in behind the wheel, enjoying the speed, testing the Mercedes against Sunset Boulevard's curves and hills. Far ahead, he sees a street light turn red. He applies the brakes.

Nothing. Worse, the Mercedes hasn't slowed its acceleration. It jets forward, increasing speed. Gentry pulls the emergency brake. Useless.

The Mercedes dashes for the stop light. Cars cross the intersection at intervals. The light remains red. Gentry slams a palm down on the horn. It blares a warning.

The Mercedes shoots through the intersection, barely missing two crossing cars, and continues on, Gentry twisting its wheel to avoid hitting anyone and slamming his foot on the brake repeatedly. He passes cars on the left, then right, and knowing he can hold off destruction no longer, Gentry opens the driver's door and leaps free. He rolls to the side of the road as the Mercedes impacts against a stone wall and explodes in a fiery flash.

Gentry stands, shaken, a few scratches marking his brush with death.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

An LAPD black-and-white shoots up the highway. Gentry rides shotgun.

EXT. ERICKSEN DRIVEWAY & HOUSE - DAY

The black-and-white screeches to a stop and Gentry bolts out of the sedan and runs toward the house. Two uniform patrolmen exit their cruiser and watch him go.

At the side door, Gentry bolts inside.

INT. ADRIENNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Gentry runs inside, looks in the kitchen, then rushes into the living room.

GENTRY
Addie! Adrienne!

Adrienne stops at the top of the stairs.

ADRIENNE
Pete?

Seeing his crazed condition and torn clothes, she descends the steps hurriedly.

ADRIENNE
What happened? Are you okay?

GENTRY
The car. Your Mercedes. Someone tampered with it.

ADRIENNE
What?

GENTRY
The accelerator stuck. No brakes.
I just drove it into a wall...
Someone just tried to kill you.
They almost killed me instead.

Adrienne is stunned. She considers the ramifications of this as she lowers herself to the couch. Then:

ADRIENNE

Pete!... It's Marta, isn't it?

GENTRY

I want you to stay inside, keep the doors locked. And here, take this -

-

Gentry pulls his service .38 out and hands it to her butt-first. Adrienne looks at it. Then:

ADRIENNE

I have a gun, remember?
(finally)
And I know how to use it.

EXT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - DAY

Gentry exits and turns to take Adrienne into his arms. They kiss. Gentry lingers in the doorway savoring her before he turns and makes for the gate... where Leon stands with a sizable grin on his face. He's seen them together.

LEON

Doing a little... undercover work,
Pete?

Gentry stops dead, takes a look over his shoulder to insure Adrienne hasn't seen Leon -- she hasn't; the door is long since closed -- before turning to again face him. Then:

GENTRY

Okay. So now you know.

LEON

Hey, don't get your back up. I'm sympathetic. Envious, even. I mean, that is one fine looking woman you have in there...

GENTRY

What brings you out here, Leon?

LEON

I get a call that says my partner was almost turned into asphalt fondue, I'm interested.

Gentry considers that a moment before:

GENTRY

Okay. I'm sorry. Thanks for giving a shit.

LEON

Pete, I'm a liberal guy --

GENTRY

(grinning)

Sure you are.

LEON

A man wants to dip the bucket in a strange well, I figure that's okay. Who am I to say no? But if the broad is a suspect --

GENTRY

Look, I'm sorry, Leon. I should have told you about Adrienne.

LEON

No, that isn't it.

GENTRY

(continuous)

I wanted to. I really did. I just --

LEON

(forceful)

No. That isn't it.

(beat)

She's a suspect in a murder investigation. She's suspected of killing her husband! And now you almost kiss some concrete at sixty miles an hour! Do I have to draw you a picture?

GENTRY

You don't understand --

LEON

Yeah, maybe I do and maybe I don't. But I'm doing my thinking with an organ located above my neck. Which is more than I can say for you.

Steamed, Gentry almost physically confronts Leon. Only respect and love keep him from pinning the older man against the wall.

GENTRY

Okay, maybe I am breaking a couple of rules!

(MORE)

GENTRY (cont'd)

But I'm not stupid and I haven't changed over-night, so don't treat me like a rookie, Leon!... Adrienne didn't sabotage her own car. Marta did!

LEON

Who's Marta?

GENTRY

Ericksen's mistress. Adrienne knew her, met her once, anyway.

LEON

She ID'd the sketch?

GENTRY

Yeah.

LEON

Why didn't she come forward with this before?

GENTRY

She thought it was over. She had no reason to suspect her husband was working with his ex-lover.

LEON

And now this Marta is out for revenge, that it?

GENTRY

Yeah. She sabotaged the car. She blames Adrienne for killing Ericksen.

Leon studies Gentry before:

LEON

So what are they, identical twins?... I'm not blind. Fenady's sketch could be your girlfriend there --

GENTRY

She explained that. When she met Ericksen, he told her she reminded him of someone. His ex-fiance'. Marta. What? You don't think a man can be attracted to two women for the same reasons?

LEON

I hope you're right, 'cause if
you're not...

GENTRY

(firm)
I'm right.

LEON

Good enough.

He pivots and exits through the gate. Gentry turns... and
sees a movement in the nearby window. Adrienne? Did she
overhear them?

Gentry moves for his car.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Pulling on his coat, Leon approaches Gentry who is going over
various reports at the desk.

LEON

(checks wristwatch)
I've got a doctor's appointment at
three and then I'm meeting Roberta
for dinner. We're trying out a
Hungarian restaurant that
specializes in small furry insects
fried in their own milk. Wanna
come along?

GENTRY

Sounds... appetizing. But I got a
couple things to follow up here.
Maybe next time.

Leon heads for the door.

LEON

Okay. Want me to bring you the
left-overs?

GENTRY

Nah. I'd be afraid they'd get
loose and mate with the locals.

Leon grins, throws Pete a wave and exits. The moment he's
gone, Gentry's smile fades. He sits thinking. Fenady's
sketch of Adrienne's look-alike peeks above a briefcase
partition.

He brings the drawing out, exposing the take-out menu from Alexander's Restaurant found at "Marta's" apartment. Gentry places both objects on the desk and looks at them a long moment before picking up the phone. He dials.

GENTRY

Mr. Zazel?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ZAZEL'S SAN PEDRO APARTMENT - DAY

The place is dreary and old. Zazel, wearing a bathrobe, stands beside an old-fashioned telephone table.

ZAZEL

Yes. Who is it?

GENTRY

Sergeant Gentry, LAPD. I met you yesterday regarding one of your tenants?

ZAZEL

Yes... What do you want?

GENTRY

I'm wondering if you could give us some help in identifying someone?

ZAZEL

Come down there? Pictures?

GENTRY

No, actually, point someone out in a restaurant. Could you do that?

ZAZEL

Sure. I can. I guess.

GENTRY

There's a Greek restaurant called Alexander's there in town. Could you meet me there about seven-thirty?

ZAZEL

I don't drive car, Sergeant.

GENTRY

That's okay. I'll pick you up. Seven-thirty, okay?

ZAZEL
Seven-thirty.

RESUME SQUAD ROOM - GENTRY

hangs up. An instant later he redials.

GENTRY
(phone)
Adrienne?

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. ADRIENNE'S HOUSE - DAY

Adrienne answers the phone.

ADRIENNE
Hello?

GENTRY
Addie, wanna grab a bite out
tonight?

ADRIENNE
(warming)
Getting tired of my cooking?

GENTRY
Never... Like Greek food?

ADRIENNE
Sure.

GENTRY
There's this place I like a lot,
Alexander's. It's in San Pedro.
Know it?

The word Alexander's impacts immediately. Adrienne covers
her concern.

ADRIENNE
Is that the place on the channel?

GENTRY
You've been there?

ADRIENNE
I think... someone took me there a
long time ago.

GENTRY
Meet you at eight?

ADRIENNE
Sure. Eight o'clock.

EXT. SAN PEDRO STREET - NIGHT

Gentry's Porsche pulls up before Zazel's apartment building and he gets out, moving for the steps and ascending. Gentry taps lightly on the door. It swings open.

GENTRY
Mr. Zazel?

Gentry leans inside.

GENTRY
Mr. Zazel?...

INTERIOR ZAZEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Gentry steps inside the nearly dark apartment. Having received no answer to his call, he reaches for his service revolver when a shadowy figure steps from behind a door and hits him. Gentry collapses as the figure, briefly seen to be a woman, rushes out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INTERIOR ZAZEL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Moments have passed. Or hours. Gentry moans, reaches up to his head and then looks at his hand. Blood.

Gentry crawls to a table, uses it to rise, then almost topples a lamp before finding its switch. Light explodes into the room. Blood has trickled and almost dried on his brow. Dizzy, Gentry almost falls, then rights himself.

Something catches his attention across the room. Zazel. Dead.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ZAZEL'S BUILDING - NIGHT

Two coroner's assistants guide a gurney toward a waiting wagon. Two uniformed cops finish querying Gentry (unheard) for their report and walk away, leaving him leaning against his Porsche, swathing his head with a ball of gauze he got earlier from ambulance attendants.

Gentry watches the old man's body being loaded into the Coroner's wagon. Thoughts. Suspicion.

INT. ALEXANDER'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gentry enters and moves for the Matre'D's desk. Blood and sweat still caked on his face, Gentry's appearance is a startling contrast to the diners about him.

GENTRY

The name is Gentry. I'm late. I have an eight o'clock reservation.

MATRE'D

But sir! It's after nine!

GENTRY

Yeah, that's fine. I'm just checking to see if my date arrived. Has anyone -- ?

MATRE'D

I'm sorry, sir, but no one used your reservation.

Gentry considers what this means as streams of people surge and flex about him. Then:

GENTRY

Telephone?

MATRE'D

In the alcove, sir. There.

Gentry courses through the crowd to a phone alcove near the restrooms, finds a coin, dials. The phone begins to ring. No answer. The ringing drones on.

INTERIOR BEACH HOUSE - NIGHT

The house lights are on. Buttermilk looks up from a nap to take in the phone. It rings on.

INTERIOR ALEXANDER'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Gentry slowly removes the receiver from his ear, lowers it into its cradle. The ringing stops. Finally. Gentry pivots and exits.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Gentry. Alone. Two shot glasses in front of him. Both empty. The bartender brings another. Fills it. Gentry empties it.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

The night crew is working. Two guys bored to hell. Playing catch with a softball across the room. Gentry enters. Tired. Mind-fucked. His briefcase is where he left it. So is the picture. Gentry looks at it.

Nearby on the table is a small pile of pink phone message notes. To Gentry. From Adrienne.

As the softball sails across the room, landing phlatt! again and again in a mitt, Gentry stares at the sketch. A decision has to be made, but he's reluctant to make it. Finally Gentry stands, checks that his service revolver is loaded, then makes for the door.

INT. ADRIENNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Reading a magazine, Adrienne reclines on her bed stroking Buttermilk, her cat, who lies nearby.

A sound. From downstairs. Adrienne freezes. Another sound. A repeat of the night Douglas was killed. Adrienne stands, moves reluctantly for the door.

STAIRS - ADRIENNE

pauses at the top of the staircase and listens. Nothing.

ADRIENNE
Pete, is that you?

Nothing. Adrienne pivots to return to the bedroom when another noise sounds below.

ADRIENNE
Pete?

No response. Buttermilk slides past her and down the stairs. She kneels and reaches out for the animal.

ADRIENNE
Buttermilk. Don't go down there.

But the cat is lost to the darkness. Adrienne stands, considers retreat. Again:

ADRIENNE
Pete, I tried to call...

When there's no answer, she withdraws.

A MOMENT LATER

Adrienne returns. With the .357 Magnum revolver that chewed up her husband. She follows its barrel's descent down the steps.

LIVING ROOM - ADRIENNE

stops at the base of the stairs and listens. A snap and a whoosh cause her to pivot and see Buttermilk near the drapes. She takes a deep breath and sweeps her eyes across the room, the gun barrel following, before realizing that the sliding door to the deck is OPEN.

ADRIENNE

(trembling)

Pete, if this is your idea of a practical joke, it isn't funny.

A form takes shape in the shadows outside. Adrienne gasps and staggers back several steps, swinging the gun about crazily, half out of control. The shadowy form moves closer, entering the house. Adrienne continues to retreat, every breath threatening to seize control of her. The figure approaches.

ADRIENNE

(sobbing)

This gun is loaded! I'll shoot!
I'll shoot, damn it!

Gentry steps into the light. The shadow figure. He stares at her with angry, murderous eyes.

ADRIENNE

Pete!

(recovering)

Pete! Damn it, I could have killed you!

(surging into his arms)

I could have killed you!

But he doesn't reciprocate her affection. She draws away, looks at him.

ADRIENNE

What's wrong? What's the matter?

GENTRY

You know what's wrong. You know better than I do. You've always known better than I do.

ADRIENNE

I don't know what that means. Tell me what that means.

GENTRY

Where were you tonight?

ADRIENNE

The rental car has a dead battery. I tried to call.

A movement beyond the plate glass door. Almost nothing.

GENTRY

Another lie... The truth starts with this: You murdered your husband in cold blood.

ADRIENNE

(gasping)
No!

GENTRY

You murdered Fenady when you thought he could identify you.

ADRIENNE

No, Pete! You know I didn't!
Marta -- !

GENTRY

Marta doesn't exist! You created her to mislead the police!

The movement becomes a person. Closer.

ADRIENNE

She exists! She wants to kill me!

GENTRY

You tried to murder me. You rigged the car, didn't you?

The intruder is a woman. She could be... Adrienne, but she isn't.

ADRIENNE

No!

GENTRY

And tonight you murdered an old man because he could identify you!

ADRIENNE

Pete, this is crazy! This is
crazy, I --

But Gentry grasps her, holding her eye-to-eye. A moment later he takes her gun.

GENTRY

You're finished lying, Mrs.
Ericksen!

Marta brings a weapon up. She aims it at Adrienne, not Gentry.

Focused on each other, neither Gentry nor Adrienne have seen Marta until this moment. Gentry leaps across the darkness knocking Adrienne to the ground as muzzleflash after muzzleflash explode in the darkness.

By the time Gentry is on his feet, the woman has disappeared. He finds Adrienne.

GENTRY

Are you okay?

ADRIENNE

Yes!... Marta!

Gentry bolts for the door.

EXT. ERICKSEN DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Gentry rockets around the side of the house and past his own Porsche to the street. He sees tail-lights flash down the block before tires screech and the car accelerates away. Gentry lowers his weapon and turns, almost colliding with Adrienne.

The distance between them is nothing, and it is immense.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BEACH HOUSE DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Flashing red lights from the roofs of several police black-and-whites bathe the area in undulating waves of crimson. Gentry talks to two uniformed officers; Leon leans against a nearby car, listening.

GENTRY

-- see if anyone can give us the
license plate number.

PATROLMAN

Sarge, it's pretty late...

GENTRY

I don't care. The car was parked a hundred yards north of here, but it may have been in the neighborhood for hours. The assailant was probably waiting for the right moment to act. Any questions?

No. The moment Gentry's finished with the blue suits, he turns and catches Leon's look. Gentry moves toward the house. Leon stops him.

LEON

Looks like you were right.

GENTRY

How's that?

LEON

She's innocent. You were right. I was wrong.

GENTRY

Yeah. It happens.

Gentry moves for the walkway.

Leon watches him go. Concerned.

A moment later Leon follows Gentry and sees him enter the house. He continues past the door, around to the front from where Gentry and Adrienne's assailant made her getaway.

INT. ADRIENNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gentry closes the door behind him. He sees Adrienne sitting on the couch. Alone. Unmoving. Looking out the window at the darkness and the sea.

Gentry moves to her.

GENTRY

Let me get you a drink.

But she has a cup in her lap. Still full.

ADRIENNE

No. Thanks.

Cold. Distant. Her eyes remain at sea.

Gentry studies her a long while before:

GENTRY

I was wrong.

The admission elicits nothing from Addie. Her mind is far away.

GENTRY

I... thought I had enough reasons--

ADRIENNE

How could you sleep with me and believe I was a... murderer?

Gentry is startled by the question and the look of intense anger etched into her features.

GENTRY

Addie, I --

ADRIENNE

How could you make love to me...
(angry and tearful)
and believe that?!

EXT. ADRIENNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Leon stands just outside the window. He sees Gentry and Adrienne talking and can barely hear the conversation. Pulling a penlight from a jacket pocket, Leon squats with an Oomph! and trails the penlight across the sand.

LEON

Jesus, I'm getting too old for this
shit...

Even from here, he can hear snippets of Gentry and Adrienne's conversation between the crashing of waves.

GENTRY'S VOICE

I said I was wrong. I'm sorry.

ADRIENNE'S VOICE

But how could you believe that,
Pete? Don't you know me? Don't
you know who I am by now?

Leon's penlight beam is picking up nothing but sand and a myriad of footprints. He sees something and reaches for it.

GENTRY'S VOICE

I know who you are, Addie.

Leon pulls a pair of swimming trunks from the sand. Nearby, something that looks like an opaque balloon. He reaches for that too, until he realizes what it is and throws it into the darkness.

LEON

Shit! Shit! Probably got AIDS
from the fucking thing!

INT. ADRIENNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Adrienne is at the door now, but continues to look out at the night. Gentry stands across the room. Distance between them. He realizes that it is insurmountable. Finally:

GENTRY

I know you don't want me to stay
here, but I'm going to arrange for
around-the-clock police
surveillance. You'll be okay.

When she doesn't respond Gentry moves for the door. It's open and he's halfway through it when she spins.

ADRIENNE

Pete!

Gentry stops. She's too far away and obscured by shadow for him to see her expression. He walks toward her. Halfway there he sees the tears in her eyes. He continues until their bodies unite. He pulls her close.

EXT. ADRIENNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Leon stands up and sees Adrienne as she is swallowed by Gentry's arms. He spins her around. Her eyes open. On Leon. For a long moment they look at one another. Then her eyes close.

AT THE DOOR - LEON

taps several times.

INT. ADRIENNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Gentry pulls his service revolver and goes to the door.

GENTRY

Who is it?

LEON'S VOICE

It's me.

Gentry opens the door and Leon leans in. He makes brief eye-contact with Adrienne across the room, but she turns away immediately.

LEON

Look, I forgot to tell you. I had a call in to the DMV. They left a message with Metzger and he called it in to my answering machine.

(fishing paper out of pocket)

Ericksen's car was sold two months ago by a used car lot in Santa Monica.

(shrugs)

It's the only lead we got.

GENTRY

I'll be out in a minute.

LEON

Right.

Leon exits. Gentry takes in Adrienne across the room. Buttermilk has curled up in her lap and she pets the cat gently.

Gentry sits on the arm of the couch beside her.

GENTRY

Leon and I are going to check out a lead. In the meantime, the safest thing is for you to accept police protection and go to a hotel.

ADRIENNE

This is my home. I'm not going to be forced out. Not by her.

Buttermilk stretches, then wanders off.

GENTRY

What about police protection?

ADRIENNE

If you think it's necessary.

Gentry takes her hands in his.

GENTRY

It's necessary... Addie, you know what you mean to me.... but you've got to understand I'm a cop, too.

(MORE)

GENTRY (cont'd)

It's what I do; it's what I am. I
can't stop being a cop just because
I'm nuts for you.

ADRIENNE

All I ask is that you believe me,
Pete.

GENTRY

I believe you.

EXT. ADRIENNE'S BEACH HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAWN

Gentry exits to find Leon waiting in his unmarked police
unit.

LEON

I've got a call in for a unit.

Gentry lights a cigaret, leans against the car. A moment
later a black-and-white pulls into the driveway.

GENTRY

One of you guys cover the beach
side. Clear everyone.

PATROL OFFICER

Right.

Gentry slides into Leon's unit and it pulls away as the
uniformed cops exit their black-and-white, stretch, move for
their assigned positions.

EXT. USED CAR LOT - DAY

Gentry and Leon lean on a late-model 'vette as a new Olds
sedan pulls into the lot. A passing mechanic notes:

MECHANIC

That's him.

Gentry and Leon follow the car.

ELSEWHERE ON THE USED CAR LOT

a tall, thin man, SALESMAN, slides out of the Olds as Gentry
and Leon approach. Gentry shows him his police ID.

GENTRY

Police officers.

SALESMAN

(wary)
Yeah?...

GENTRY

We're trying to trace down a car
you reported selling two months
ago.

SALESMAN

The buyer didn't re-register it,
right?

LEON

You got it.

SALESMAN

Yeah, that happens a lot. C'mon,
I'll look it up for you.

INT. USED CAR LOT OFFICE - DAY

The salesman thumbs through files in a cabinet drawer using a
slip of paper Leon gave him as a guide.

SALESMAN

Here it is... Blue '87 Chrysler.
Sold it June 9th. Paid cash.

GENTRY

To a woman?

SALESMAN

(surprised)
No. Man.

Gentry and Leon share a look. Gentry takes a wallet-size
photo of Ericksen from his pocket, hands it to the Salesman.

GENTRY

This the guy?

The Salesman looks at the picture an instant before:

SALESMAN

No... The guy who bought this car
was maybe thirty, smaller. You
know, not as beafy-looking.

LEON

Got a name?

SALESMAN

I got the whole nine yards, but the
guy didn't register the car, it's
probably bullshit.

GENTRY

We'll take it anyway.

SALESMAN

(reading file)

Beavis. Steven Beavis. 12386
King's Road, West Hollywood.

LEON

We'll need a Xerox of that purchase
contract, too.

EXT. USED CAR LOT - DAY

Gentry and Leon pacing toward their car.

LEON

Okay, I'll give you three
scenarios. One: An uninvolved
party bought the car for his own
reasons and later turned it over to
Ericksen. Two: Ericksen paid
someone to buy it for him. Three:
Marta has a boy friend and once
Mrs. Ericksen was out of the way,
they planned to kill Ericksen for
his money.

GENTRY

(determined)

Fuck scenarios.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

Leon's unmarked police unit pulls to the curb before a vacant
lot.

INT. UNMARKED POLICE UNIT - DAY

Gentry behind the wheel. Leon checks the address against
their Xerox of the purchase contract.

LEON

Yeah. This should be the place.

Gentry curses beneath his breath and puts the car into
motion. All business. Focused. Leon studies him.
Concerned.

INT. SQUAD ROOM - DAY

Gentry on the phone. Leon sits nearby studying the car
purchase contract.

GENTRY

(phone)

She doesn't want to leave the house, Captain... Yeah, I know, but at least we could... Manpower shortage, sure, but... Yes, sir. I understand.

Gentry slams the phone down.

GENTRY

The fuck I do!

LEON

What is it?

Rising and pulling on his coat:

GENTRY

They're yanking our protective surveillance. I'm getting her out of that house. You coming?

LEON

No. Think I'll check out the rest of this.

He gestures at the contract.

GENTRY

It's a dead end.

Gentry moves for the exit.

LEON

Yeah, well, even good liars can't lie all the time... Hey, Gentry!

Gentry turns at the door and gives Leon a look that asks, What?

LEON

Keep your fly zipped, okay?

Gentry gives him a gruff look and exits.

Leon gives the purchase contract a glance, then pulls it closer for yet another read.

INSERT - PURCHASE CONTRACT

Leon's finger traces down its middle, stopping for the briefest moment on the line that asks Occupation?

The word Actor has been penciled in. Leon's finger returns to the line.

RESUME LEON

as he thinks about it before picking up the phone to dial.

INTERCUT LEON'S PHONE CONVERSATION WITH:

INT. LARRY EDMONDS BOOK STORE - DAY

PHIL CLAYBORNE, late 40s, balding but otherwise youthful-looking, moves up the counter and answers the phone.

PHIL

(phone)

Larry Edmonds Book Store. This is Phil Clayborne.

LEON

Phil, Leon Kessler. I'm looking for an actor. Maybe a stage guy. You still doing equity waiver theater?

PHIL

Sure. What's his name?

LEON

Steven Beavis.

Phil barks a laugh.

PHIL

Beavis isn't an actor! He's a part! A character in a play!

Leon is stunned. Expecting nothing, he's drawn a something, but what? Then:

LEON

Which play?

PHIL

Velasco's Impertinence In Hell.

LEON

Where's it playing?

PHIL

Not anywhere now. It closed at The Actor's Craft Theater a couple of months back, I think...

RESUME LEON

as he slams the phone down in triumph.

LEON

Thank you, God! Thank you God for
another smart ass!

In absolute glee Leon grabs his coat and heads for the door.

EXT. ERICKSEN DRIVE-WAY - DAY

Gentry's Porsche pulls in beside a black-and-white. A
uniformed officer leans against his unit.

GENTRY

You guys get the call yet?

UNIFORMED COP

Yeah. My partner's inside telling
the woman.

Gentry moves for the house, passing another uniformed cop on
the way.

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - DAY

Gentry enters.

GENTRY

Addie?

No answer. Gentry moves for the stairs.

GENTRY

Addie?

ADRIENNE'S VOICE

Out here.

Gentry heads for the sliding door leading to the outside
deck.

EXT. ERICKSEN DECK - DAY

Addie leans against the rail and turns to face Gentry as he
approaches. The shorts and sweater she's wearing contrast
the .357 that rests on the rail beside her.

ADRIENNE

Pete, what's going on? That
policeman said they were leaving.

GENTRY

It's bureaucratic bullshit. The department won't allocate men for protective surveillance. I want you to go pack a bag and I'm going to take you out of here.

ADRIENNE

Pete, I already told you --

GENTRY

(forcefully)

Just do it.

Adrienne searches his eyes and finds steel. She turns and enters the house. Gentry follows.

INT. ADRIENNE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Adrienne gets several small suitcases from the closet, opens them on the bed. She begins packing as Gentry watches from the doorway.

After a moment she stops, straightens.

GENTRY

What?

ADRIENNE

Jesus, Pete... I'm so scared...

Gentry crosses the room and takes her into his arms. Ericksen's dried blood stains the floor nearby. Neither notice.

EXT. ACTOR'S CRAFT THEATER - DAY

A 99-seat pill box on Cahuenga Boulevard West. Leon's unmarked unit pulls up outside. He exits and moves for the the marquee, which displays the current production and cast. An arrow sign suggests he go around to the back.

INT. ACTOR'S CRAFT THEATER - DAY

Leon enters the lobby. 8x10 glossies adorn the walls. Past productions. Past "stars." No one we'd know. The place appears vacant. Then hammering from beyond a curtain.

LEON

Hey! Anybody here?

Voices from beyond the curtain. Then a woman in her late 50s emerges through the veil.

THEATER MANAGER
Yeah, can I help you?

LEON
Maybe. I'm looking for an actor.

THEATER MANAGER
(grin)
Actors we got. Are you a casting agent or a producer?

LEON
You had a production of
Impertinence in Hell a couple of
months back. I need the name of
the actor who played Steven Beavis.

THEATER MANAGER
Oh, sure. Paul Basque. He's good.

LEON
Can I see a picture?

The Theater Manager pulls a photo album from beneath the counter.

THEATER MANAGER
(thumbing)
Sure. We keep all of the
production stills. And of course
the actors leave a supply of their
8x10s... Here it is.

She spins the photo album around. Leon looks. A half dozen actors in contemporary dress in front of an amateurish backdrop. Young. Good looking.

LEON
Which one is he?

THEATER MANAGER
There. On the end.

Paul Basque. Lean. Dark. Otherwise a nonentity.

LEON
Good. I'll need a photograph I can keep.

THEATER MANAGER
Sure. I'll get you an 8x10 and a resume. Just take a second.

LEON

Thanks.

The moment she's gone, Leon again peruses the production still before leafing through the book. He stops at one photo. Private Lives, the caption reads. Two couples. Again, Paul Basque. Leon's vision trails across to the woman beside Basque in the picture. He freezes.

LEON

Oh, shit.

The woman is... Adrienne. Or her dead ringer, Marta!

Leon rips the photo free and rushes out.

EXT. ERICKSEN DRIVEWAY - DAY

Gentry ties two suitcases to the rack on the rear of his Porsche. Adrienne slips into the passenger seat, Gentry behind the wheel.

EXT. PHONE BOOTH - DAY

Leon on the phone. Hearing ring after ring.

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - DAY

The place is vacant. The phone rings incessantly.

RESUME LEON

as he stabs the disconnect bar, then dials another number.

LEON

(phone)

This is Kessler. Has Gentry returned?... Has he called in?... Okay, page him. When he calls, give him this number. 555-7125. Tell him it's an emergency. I'm standing by.

EXT./INT. MOVING PORSCHE - DAY

Gentry's belt pager sounds. He twists to turn it off.

ADRIENNE

You want to stop and see what that's about?

GENTRY

It can wait.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DAY

The door swings open and the bellboy enters with Adrienne's bags. Gentry and Adrienne follow. The bellboy places the bags on the bed stand, pulls open the drapes, presents himself for a tip and exits once Gentry hands him a bill.

The moment he's gone:

GENTRY

Okay, I want you to stay in this room. Call room service for food. Don't go outside. Not for anything. Understood?

Adrienne's eyes sweep across her prison, then take in Gentry. She nods assent.

GENTRY

Do you have the gun?

Adrienne opens her bag, takes out the .357 Magnum, returns it. She tosses the bag to the bed.

ADRIENNE

Is it ever going to be over?

Gentry takes her, holds her rigid. A long look, then he kisses her.

GENTRY

We'll find her. You've just got to hang in there.

ADRIENNE

(small smile)
I'm hanging.

GENTRY

I'll be back tonight. Late. I'll call first.

Gentry kisses her once more, and then he leaves. Adrienne locks the door and gives the room a long, bored pan.

At the window, Adrienne sees Gentry exit the hotel and move for his car. The beat-up Porsche thunders out of the parking lot. Adrienne's eyes sweep the surroundings outside, stopping on... a cat being fed by one of the hotel workers.

ADRIENNE
Oh, shit! Buttermilk!

Adrienne picks up the phone and taps the receiver.

ADRIENNE
This is Four-Seventeen. I'm going
to need a cab...

EXT. THE COAST HIGHWAY - EVENING

Gentry's Porsche powers up the hill to Santa Monica and east toward the city.

EXT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - NIGHT

A taxi pulls into the driveway and Adrienne gets out. She pays the cabbie and he drives away.

INTERIOR ERICKSEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Adrienne opens the door to the dark house and enters, closing the door behind her. She snaps on a light in the kitchen which spills shadows into the living room.

ADRIENNE
Buttermilk? Buttermilk?...

Adrienne searches the living room for a moment before Buttermilk strolls out from behind the couch and into her arms.

ADRIENNE
There you are!

Adrienne pets Buttermilk a moment before a shadow from the kitchen light crawls across her. Startled, Adrienne spins... to find Leon standing just inside the door.

Tense and fearful, Adrienne almost whispers:

ADRIENNE
Detective Kessler! You startled
me! What are you doing here?

LEON
Mrs. Ericksen, I found out some
very interesting things about you
today.

ADRIENNE
(hoarse)
Oh? Like what?

Leon pulls the folded production still from his pocket and holds it up for her to see.

LEON

Your thespian background, for one thing.

ADRIENNE

I used to act, yes.

LEON

You used to act with Paul Basque. You remember him, don't you?

ADRIENNE

Of course.

LEON

Paul purchased the car your husband supposedly used the night he tried to kill you. Know what that suggests to me, Mrs. Ericksen?

ADRIENNE

No. What's that?

LEON

Gotcha!... There aint no Marta and there never was.

LEON

You and Paul Basque killed your husband for the insurance. He bought the car as a ruse. You've been lovers since you performed together.

(a grin)

On the stage, I mean.

ADRIENNE

You're mistaken, Detective. Paul Basque was a friend of my husband's. He was the one who introduced us.

Leon's expression reveals that his neat package may be falling apart.

An explosion, Marta leaps from the shadows where she's been hiding, and yelling like a madwoman, plunges a knife deep into Leon's chest as Adrienne screams.

Leon staggers back, already falling into the abyss of shock, as he stares at Marta. Gurgling, Leon drops to the carpet. Adrienne's screams continue...

INT. SQUAD ROOM - NIGHT

The place is almost deserted as the last of the day crew wander out. Gentry enters and moves for his work area. He corrals FELDMAN, another detective.

GENTRY

Any messages?

FELDMAN

It's all there in your basket. Leon was trying to get in touch with you earlier, and there've been a couple of calls from some woman.

Gentry finds his pile of messages and shuffles through them. One makes him stop. Adrienne Another. Two more. Four in all. Gentry checks the times. Last half hour or so.

The phone rings. Gentry almost leaps for it.

GENTRY

Homicide. Sergeant Gentry.

INTERCUT
GENTRY'S PHONE
CONVERSATION
WITH:

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - NIGHT

The place is pitch-black. Adrienne's sweaty, tension-drawn face can be seen by moonlight.

ADRIENNE

(phone)
Pete?

GENTRY

Addie, are you okay?

ADRIENNE

Pete... Marta!...

GENTRY

What? What is it? What about
Marta?

ADRIENNE

She's here! At the beach house,
Pete! She's -- !

But Marta grabs the phone from Adrienne.

MARTA

I'm going to kill the bitch!...
Unless you do exactly as I say!

Marta shoves the phone back into Adrienne's face. Adrienne is sobbing now. She's almost insane with fear.

MARTA

Tell him!

ADRIENNE

She wants the money! If you... If you'll come here and don't bring the police, she'll trade me for the money tomorrow. She wants you to go pick it up.

MARTA

(shrill)
Come here! Now! And no cops!
Tomorrow you get her and I get the money. That's the deal!

RESUME GENTRY

as he hears a click. The phone remains in his hand when the out-of-service tone comes on.

Across the room, Feldman is just now moving for the door.

GENTRY

Feldman!

Feldman stops, surprised by Gentry's outburst.

FELDMAN

What is it, Pete?

Gentry wrestles with it a long moment before:

GENTRY

Nothing. 'Night. See you tomorrow.

FELDMAN

(curious)

Sure. Tomorrow... Is anything wrong?

GENTRY

No. Nothing.

Gentry surges past him and out.

EXT./INT. GENTRY'S PORSCHE - NIGHT

Gentry drives with passionate abandon. His steely eyes are fixed on the road ahead and farther, the beach house and what waits for him there.

EXT. A LONELY STRETCH OF BEACH - NIGHT

The Porsche screeches to a stop at the edge of a dune, dust billowing behind it. Gentry leaps free of the car, pops the front trunk, pulls out a suitcase. Removing his jacket, Gentry pulls shirts and slacks from the case and tosses them aside until he finds a dark turtle-neck sweater and pulls it on.

From a crumpled sack on the passenger seat Gentry takes a can of black shoe polish and spreads it across cheek and brow. A moment later he's pulled a knit cap over his hair and ears.

He tapes a knife to one calf.

Looking like a commando now, Gentry moves for the beach.

EXT. BEACH SIDE OF ERICKSEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Gentry pauses near the surf. The house is completely dark. He makes for it.

NEAR THE DECK - GENTRY

pauses and listens. The roar of the sea drowns everything. Creeping closer, Gentry sees movement at the window, a brief, formless shape passing in the moonlight.

Gentry flattens onto the deck and rests, cheek-to-board, for a long moment. Then, like a snake, he crawls toward the glass door.

Inches from the glass, Gentry looks inside.

INT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - NIGHT

A surreal scene: Leon sits in one chair. Leon's corpse is out of Gentry's line-of-sight.

Adrienne sits absolutely still on the couch. She might be dead herself... until her eyes betray a look at the glass and the sea beyond. Can she see Gentry?

A form in near shadow. A gun in its hand.

EXT. ERICKSEN HOUSE - NIGHT

Gentry brings his weapon up and waits for the shadow to become a target. It denies him. The shadow flits to another darkness, this nebula behind Adrienne, whose body shields it. Suppressing a curse, Gentry slowly returns the gun to his belt and retreats from the glass.

At the deck's edge, Gentry rolls to the sand and makes his way along the front of the house to the side walkway.

At the side door, Gentry drops to his knees and maneuvers below the window-line past the entrance.

Gentry ascends the wall of the garage to the second floor, then up to the master bedroom window. A moment later, he's inside.

INT. ADRIENNE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Gentry turns from the window and knocks a lamp from its perch, catching it inches from the floor.

A moment later he's at the door. Like the night of Douglas Ericksen's death, the door squeaks as it is pulled open.

From below:

MARTA'S VOICE

What was that?!

Half through the doorway, Gentry listens to:

ADRIENNE'S VOICE

What? I didn't hear anything.

MARTA'S VOICE

A noise. From the stairs.

No choice now. He continues through.

STAIRS - GENTRY

pulls his service revolver and moves with stealth to the top of the stairs.

ADRIENNE'S VOICE

It's nothing. It's probably my cat, Buttermilk.

MARTA

(rough)

We're going to check it out anyway!

Gentry assumes a firing position with the revolver pointed downward into the well of darkness. He hears footsteps... and then the meow of a cat as it prances across the threshold of the stairs below.

Adrienne, having just moved into moonlight, picks up the cat.

ADRIENNE

See? I told you. It was just Buttermilk.

MARTA

Come on. Back over here.

Adrienne turns. Her eyes trail upward. She sees Gentry. Their eyes lock. She continues to pet the cat automatically before:

ADRIENNE

It's all right, Buttermilk. It's all right.

Holding the cat to her cheek, Adrienne turns and does what Marta has told her to do.

Gentry descends the steps. One at a time. Slowly. Each foot-fall measured to deny noise. The gun held out and aimed, prepared to fire. Voices. Marta's. Adrienne's. Words lost to the hiss of Gentry's breathing. Sweat cascades from his brow, sweat and shoe polish dripping to the carpet. Still he moves forward.

LIVING ROOM - GENTRY

reaches the base of the stairs. He sees Adrienne sitting before the window still petting the cat. Across from her another form, obscured by darkness.

ADRIENNE

He's not coming.

MARTA'S VOICE

The hell he's not.

ADRIENNE

This isn't going to work.

MARTA'S VOICE

You better hope it does.

Gentry moves forward until he's mere feet from the sitting form obscured by darkness. Then:

GENTRY

Freeze! Don't move!

The silence is deafening. No motion at all. Finally:

GENTRY

Adrienne, turn on a light.

Adrienne stands, moves to the end of the couch, reaches over and switches the lamp on.

Gentry stares down the barrel of his cocked gun at... Leon's corpse. Stunned, he cannot move.

ADRIENNE

He's dead, Pete.

A mindless reaction, Gentry pivots to face Marta who stands across the room, her weapon aimed at Adrienne.

MARTA

Drop it! Or I'll kill her!

Adrienne stands between them, an easy target. Gentry lowers his weapon, drops it.

Marta moves forward, gestures Gentry to move back, takes the weapon he dropped on the floor. The moment the gun is in Marta's possession, Adrienne steps forward and kisses Marta lustily.

Adrienne pulls back and grins at Gentry, who stands mute.

MARTA

So tell me, darling... what kind of fuck is he?

ADRIENNE

Not bad, actually. Not as good as you, but not bad at all.

MARTA

Lots of enthusiasm, I imagine...

ADRIENNE

(appraising Gentry)

Yes, that's one way to put it.

They see Gentry's dumb-struck look and laugh.

ADRIENNE

You'd better tell him, or he's liable to have a heart attack.

MARTA

Can't have that, can we? Too early.

Marta reaches up and pulls the wig off. "Marta" becomes Paul Basque before our eyes.

MARTA/PAUL

So you see, we're not perverse killers, Sergeant Gentry, just the normal kind. Heterosexual, that is. Sit down.

(to Adrienne)

Bring me my clothes.

Adrienne ascends the stairs to the bedroom as Gentry sits beside Leon, who topples onto him. Gentry catches the corpse of his friend and, as if realizing that he's dead for the first time, gently lowers Leon to the floor.

PAUL

A casualty of poor planning, your friend.

Gentry's look of anger and hatred surprises even Paul.

PAUL

Don't get any ideas. I enjoy killing. It's more fun than anything except...

(grin)

... stealing that extra bow.

Adrienne returns with Paul's clothes. He gives her Gentry's gun. She trains it on Gentry.

PAUL

Don't kill him unless you have to.

Paul removes the blouse and padded bra.

PAUL

Sergeant Gentry, we're going to make a little deal. The honest truth is, we bungled the job. We thought we'd planned an air-tight murder, but as you well know, it started to unravel almost immediately.

The skirt drops to the floor, revealing pantihose and beneath them, jockey shorts. He kicks off the heels, sits to remove the pantihose.

PAUL

Now it doesn't matter if we kill you or not; your successor will come to the same conclusions you would have come to, which is that Adrienne and an accomplice killed her husband for his money. So... we have to get rid of Adrienne Ericksen, too.

GENTRY

What makes you think you're getting any better at this?

Naked but for the jockey shorts, Paul pulls on jeans and a t-shirt.

PAUL

This is the "you can't get away with it" speech. Save it. If we get caught now, we both fry and we know it... There are a number of witnesses who saw a woman matching "Marta's" description accompany Adrienne Ericksen this afternoon as she withdrew two million dollars in insurance money from her account. Tomorrow or the next day someone's going to find Detective Kessler's body there.

GENTRY

Or maybe they'll find mine.

Paul stops for only a moment before using a garment to wipe make-up from his face. He grins.

PAUL

Or maybe they'll find yours, out in the desert where you chased Marta and her prisoner and she killed you in a fire-fight.

Dressed now, Paul gathers up his "Marta" clothes and ties them together with a belt.

PAUL

They'll also find lots of blood in Adrienne's car. Adrienne's blood. She's already donated it. It's in the fridge... They'll assume the worst. Adrienne's dead. Officers Gentry and Kessler dead. And Marta a very wealthy psychopath.

GENTRY

It won't hold up. Somebody'll break it wide.

PAUL

Doesn't matter. They'll look for a woman. As you can see, something I'm not.

Dressed now, Paul returns and gestures for Adrienne to give him her weapon. The moment she does Gentry dives for the endtable lamp. Paul fires, hitting Gentry as he flies across the couch and behind, the light dying behind him.

PAUL

Out of the way!

Paul pushes Adrienne toward the glass door and fires three times, each round providing a flash of illumination.

Gentry, behind the couch, yanks the knife free from where he taped it to his calf and crawls away from the flashes.

PAUL

Turn on the lights! Turn on the lights!

Paul almost topples over a table before he reaches the wall where the light switch is located. The light flashes on... to disclose Gentry standing across the room, waiting. The moment Paul turns Gentry's knife thuds into his chest and he drops already dead to the floor.

Gentry and Adrienne stand across the room from one another, Gentry defenseless, Adrienne still armed with a handgun.

He hobbles toward her, the red stain on the left side of his ribcage widening as he moves. Adrienne brings the pistol up. Gentry continues. She cocks the weapon. Gentry gets closer. Her finger tenses. Closer. Finger squeezing. Closer.

She lowers the gun.

ADRIENNE

I never wanted to hurt you, Pete. I love you. Paul made me do it. He was crazy. I was afraid of him. Afraid that if I didn't --

He takes the gun from her.

ADRIENNE

I have the money. We can figure something out, can't we? Something to explain all this? Because I love you, Pete. We can be rich and we can be together.

Gentry is in tremendous pain. Blood seeps out of him. He blinks to retain consciousness. And there's more. After everything she's done, there remains in Gentry feeling for Adrienne.

Adrienne looks up into his eyes. Her beauty is exquisite.

ADRIENNE

We can think of something to say...

GENTRY

You have the right to remain silent. Anything you say can and will be used against you in court...

Gentry staggers back to the phone, gets a dial tone, taps in three numbers. As he dials:

GENTRY

You have the right to an attorney. If you can't afford an attorney, one will be provided for you.
(phone)
This is Sergeant Gentry, LAPD...

FADE OUT:

THE END