TOTALED

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EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT

New Hampshire. Summer.
A dark tree-lined country road.
Two cars drag-race, loud.

CHUCK
Yeeee-hah!

CHUCK drives a spiffy Firebird. TERRY drives another fast car.

Chuck St. Amour is an average 20 YO.
His 16 YO girlfriend DANIELLE Normandin rides with him.

Terry Sullivan is a big bruiser 20 YO.
His 16 YO girlfriend LINDA Ruggieri rides with him.
The girls drink and smoke dope and give their boyfriends hits. Everyone hollers.
The cars drive insanely fast on this narrow back road --
-- Until the Firebird skids and slams into a huge tree.

Terry finds Chuck shattered behind the wheel. Linda is gone, out of sight. Danielle cries.

TERRY
Chuck. Oh, Jesus. Let me get you out'a there.

CHUCK
No, no. You gotta -- gotta --

EXT. GARAGE YARD -- MORNING

Theme music: Clanky blues like "Gun Street Girl" by Tom Waits

Blake's Service is a three-bay shade-tree garage. The YARD is jammed with cars awaiting service.

TITLE OVER:

TOTALED

Next to the yard is the junkyard. Acres of smashed cars.
PAN PAST wrecks to find TYGER BLAKE sitting on a hood of one, eating lunch, the loneliest woman in the world.

Susan "Tyger" Blake is our unofficial detective. Her hair is hacked short. Her face is "frozen" because it's lined with fine scars. She wears mechanic's clothes and a ball cap. The name stitched on her shirt is "CARL".

MANNY drives in the tow truck towing the smashed Firebird.

Manny Schultz is big, gutty, placid.

TYGER
Jesus. What happened to that?

MANNY
Drag racing on windy roads'll do that.

TYGER
Did the tree survive?

MANNY
Oh, yeah. It's ready for next Friday night. The kid driving it's not too good, cop said. Four legs in traction and tubes up his nose.

Tyger peers into the car. The front seat is soaked in BLOOD.

TYGER
He's lucky to be anywhere. You used to drag on back roads, didn't you?

MANNY
Yeah...

TYGER
What'd the chief say?

MANNY
Hold it till the insurance guy looks it over.

TYGER
Then what? Fill the front seat with dirt and plant tomatoes?

MANNY
Ought'a grow good with all the blood and bone to feed 'em.

Manny backs the wreck into weeds along a chain link fence. Gets out to unhook it.
A chunk falls off the car.

MANNY
What'ya bet insurance'll say it's not totaled.

TYGER
I know how it feels.

Tyger goes back to work.

LATER

She shakes a catalytic converter to get a rattle out. Throws it down in frustration.

Sound: Rattle rattle.

Junkyard DOGS, Bruno and Fido, perk up.

A faded Detroit clunker pulls in. It smokes and wheezes.

NICOLE gets out. Trash falls out with her.

Nicole is 33 YO but looks older, thin, worried, strung-out, Southern trailer trash with a Texas accent.

ASHLEY, her daughter, is underweight and timid with long blonde hair.

Dogs sniff. Ashley recoils.

TYGER
They don't bite, honey. Can I help you?

NICOLE
(Texas twang)
A friend sent me 'round? Said you was good at servin' cars?

TYGER
I am. What's wrong?

NICOLE
It's stutterin', like? Starts real hard? Runs rough?

TYGER
Dieseling? Timing, maybe. Or the fuel filter.

Tyger opens the hood, fiddles the throttle. Fetches tools and quickly replaces the fuel filter with a new one.
Nicole starts the engine. It roars, fine.

TYGER
Can't beat a Detroit headbanger.

NICOLE
Wh-What do I owe ye?

Tyger notes Ashley's bunny slippers have holes.

TYGER
Got ten bucks?

NICOLE
Oh, yeah. I thought it would be a lot more'n that? Everyone said these damned Yankees was so cold and hardhearted, you know?

Tyger takes two fives, gives one five back.

TYGER
There's a Big Lots on Route 33. Follow the road and bear left. Buy your daughter a pair of sneakers.

NICOLE
All righ', I -- I'll do that. That lady said you were real nice.

TYGER
What lady?

NICOLE
Oh, just a frien'. God bless you.

Nicole drives off with Ashley looking back.

Manny comes out.

MANNY
Who sent her?

TYGER
A friend.

MANNY
Hers or yours?

TYGER
Gotta be hers.

MANNY
Selling parts below cost'll bring 'em runnin'.
TYGER
Gouge the next guy.

MANNY
Now that every woman within fifty miles knows we got a female mechanic, we got three times's much work as ever.

TYGER
Serves us right.

LATER
Tyger still fusses with the converter to find the rattle.

Sound: Rattle rattle.

Terry Sullivan drives in. He's a little banged up from the accident.

TERRY
Hey, you work here? I want that Firebird towed to my house. What'd'ya charge?

TYGER
I won't charge you a dime.

TERRY
Good. 'Cause --

TYGER
'Cause it's not going anywhere 'til the investigation's done.

TERRY
Can I talk to the guy who owns this dump?

TYGER
You're looking at him.

TERRY
I want that car.

TYGER
What for? It's totaled. Even the tire valve covers are cracked.

TERRY
(reaching for wallet)
I just want it. What's it gonna take?
TYGER
A court order.

TERRY
Hey, look, I'm Terry Sullivan. I --

Tyger slams the converter in frustration. A beech nut pops out.

TYGER
Squirrels.

TERRY
The car.

TYGER
Isn't Terry a girl's name?

Terry moves to threaten Tyger. She whips a long wrench from a leg pocket. Dogs growl.

Terry backs up and drives off.

TYGER
(to dogs)
Guys, what's up with that car?

INT. TYGER'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Tyger's apartment is over a hardware store. It's boring and undecorated.

Oddly, World War 2 memorabilia is stacked around. Helmets, rifles, many boxes of books.

And a picture of Tyger, her ex-husband, and their beautiful daughter.

Tyger sits on a broken couch watching a WW2 show on the History Channel. She pounds blackberry brandy.

A knock at the door startles her.

TYGER
What the hell?
(calls)
Go away.

Settles back on couch. Another knock makes her jump.

Exasperated, Tyger opens the door.
TYGER

What do you --

TWO OLD LADIES wait. Tyger stares muzzily.

OLD LADY 1
Hello, dear. Do you live here?

OLD LADY 2
Of course, she does. Don't you, dear?

OLD LADY 1
I say, dear, are you all right?

TYGER
What do you want?

OLD LADY 2
We're bringing 'round a petition to protect the integrity of our downtown. To keep Romney pristine.

OLD LADY 1
A decent place for people to live in peace and raise their children. Would you care to sign it?

TYGER
I'm not signing anything.

OLD LADY 2
It's going in right across the street.

TYGER
What is?

OLD LADY 2
The nightclub?

OLD LADY 1
A certain committee of well-meaning but addled citizens propose to build low-income apartments in the old Woolworth's across the street.

OLD LADY 2
The theater owner -- he's from out of town -- wants to build a nightclub in his cellar. A gay club.

OLD LADY 1
Surely, dear, you don't want mobs of poor people moving into downtown, do you?
TYGER
I'm poor. I live downtown.

OLD LADY 2
But surely you don't want homosexuals walking our sidewalks?

TYGER
What I want is for people to leave me alone.

Tyger slams the door.

Crowd noise comes from the street. Why?
Tyger looks. Across the street is the old Bijou Theater.

People mill on the sidewalk randomly. Why?

Tyger snags her keys and exits.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- NIGHT

The theater crowd, agitated, fills the street. CHIEF UTMeyer oversees. Tyger approaches.

Chief Utmeyer is 40, trim, small-town jocular.

TYGER
What's going on?

CHIEF UTMeyer
Bomb scare.

TYGER
What, somebody hates art flicks?

CHIEF UTMeyer
All kinds of nuts out there. How're you getting along?

TYGER
Ask my parole officer.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Ever hear on your PI license?

TYGER
I have a criminal record.

CHIEF UTMeyer
You can appeal.
TYGER
Who'd hire me?

CHIEF UTMeyer
(points at theater)
The owner might.

Tyger stares a moment, mentally debating, but turns away.

TYGER
Naw.

Tyger's car is an old Army jeep, much battered and full of junk.

Heading for her front door, she looks up at her apartment, doesn't want to go back. Looks at the night sky.

Tyger gets in her Jeep and drives off.

INT. PAT'S CAFE -- EVENING

Pat's Cafe is a beer and a shot joint with plywood walls, a loud jukebox, and no ambience.

Tyger pounds blackberry brandy.

Won't talk to Pat.

Won't talk to guys.

Something frustrates her. She leaves.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT

Tyger drives her Jeep to the Firebird crash site.

Tyger stops and studies. The road is long and straight here: odd place to swerve.

Her flashlight traces skid marks to a huge tree with crunched bark.

Tyger searches for she doesn't know what.

TYGER
Something...

Shaking her head, Tyger touches the tree.
TYGER
(to the tree)
At least you're all right.

EXT. GARAGE YARD -- MORNING

Tyger and Manny work on cars.

A yellow Porsche PULLS in. BRETTA gets out.

Bretta Olsen is 35, a little chubby, rich in a sun dress and sunglasses. She carries a YORKY dog. She's sunny and smiles a lot.

She peers at Tyger, and the name "Carl" on her shirt.

BRETTA
Susan Blake?

TYGER
(points to shirt)
Carl quit. What can I do for you that Italian engineers can't?

BRETTA
It's not my car. It's the Bijou Theater.

TYGER
Somebody finally bomb it?

Yorky squirms. Bretta puts it down with Bruno and Fido.

The dogs get along fine.

BRETTA
No somebody tried to burn it.

TYGER
Arson?

BRETTA
Cary Foye -- he's the owner -- told me that last night someone loosened the oil line that runs to the furnace. He was working late and smelled oil and caught it in time.

TYGER
He catch who sabotaged the oil line?
BRETTA
No. He covered the spill with cat litter. He's afraid to report it. The health inspector would shut him down.

TYGER
Burning up a theater full of movie-goers would be a bigger health hazard.

Bretta takes out a checkbook.

BRETTA
Can I hire you to guard the theater?

TYGER
Can you what?

BRETTA
I represent the Romney Affordable Housing Committee. Perhaps you've heard of us? We plan to build low-income housing in the old Woolworth's, and maybe the top floor of the theater too.

TYGER
Actually, I did hear that.

BRETTA
We won't have any place to build if the block burns down. I was hoping to hire someone as a night guard.

TYGER
So hire someone. The phone book's full of security firms.

BRETTA
I'd rather have you.

TYGER
Why?

BRETTA
Chief Utmeyer recommended you. He said you used to be a police officer.

TYGER
Used to be.

BRETTA
He said you were applying for a private detective's license.
TYGER
And like I told the chief, the state denied it. I have a criminal record.

BRETTA
Will you guard the theater? You just need to stay there through the night.

TYGER
Aren't you going to ask why I did time?

BRETTA
No. The past doesn't matter.

TYGER
Some of us, it's all we got.

BRETTA
The chief said you had the tenacity of a bulldog -- and the face and personality to match. He wasn't very nice.

TYGER
Well, neither am I. I guess I'll guard your theater. Us working-class poor have to stick together. Write me a check for $500, if you can afford it.

BRETTA
I can afford it. I'm non-working rich.

TYGER
Then make it a thousand.

Bretta writes a check.

BRETTA
I'm glad to see you service all kinds of cars, even indigents' cars.

Bretta drives off.

TYGER
"Indigents?"

SOON
In the office, Tyger pecks at the grimy computer. Manny enters.
MANNY
You running down a master cylinder for Dodson's Impala?

TYGER
(types)
Nope. Running a civil records check on Bretta Olsen.

MANNY
You're using the woman's own money to investigate her?

TYGER
The person who reports the crime is the primary suspect.

Manny peers at the screen.

MANNY
That don't seem fair. What's her story?

TYGER
No pending lawsuits. No outstanding judgments. Married to Rolf Olsen.

MANNY
Drives an Escalade. Seen it around town.

TYGER
(types)

MANNY
It tells you all that stuff on the Internet?

TYGER
If you pay for it.
(types)
Rolf Olsen... Clean record. Ex-Army, 23 years. ABAT-SCOM, BRN-MIT. Are those computer terms?

MANNY
Military units. Only served in the US and Germany. Desk jockey, probably.
TYGER
Serves on various boards in Boston.
Owns his own corporation, Northwestvest. Who owns the theater?

MANNY
Cary Foye, his name is. From out of town.

TYGER
types
Cary... Foye... No felonies or misdemeanors in New Hampshire... No tax liens, no bankruptcies, no mechanics' liens. Hmm... The theater is incorporated as "Bijou Productions".
(types)
We can look up the articles of incorporation on the state web site... "A. Active and in Good Standing."
Incorporated March last year.
President is... Evelyn Sutter of 435 Tamworth Lane, Romney.

MANNY
El Camino.

TYGER
That's in California.

MANNY
No, her husband used to drive an El Camino. Bronze color, white sidewalls, 1984, cherry, not a lick of rust. Only drove it in the summertime. He must be dead by now.

TYGER
Maybe he was buried in it. Was he rich enough to leave his wife part-owner of a downtown theater?

MANNY
Dunno. He sure didn't spend money on cars.

INT. THEATER CELLAR -- NIGHT
A grimy old furnace room. Black cat litter covers the floor.
Tyger stands on cinder blocks. Finishes hooking up a webcam tucked in the ceiling corner.
TYGER

OK.

CARY watches.

Cary Foye is 33, gay, the theater owner.

CARY
And this will protect my theater from arson?

TYGER
Provided they turn the light on when they come down here.

Tyger goes to the top of the stairs. Pulls her cell phone. Turns off the light.

It's dark.

CARY
Cozy.

Tyger flicks on the light. Immediately her cell phone rings.

Sound: Tyger's cell phone rings

TYGER
Look.

CLOSE ON: Tyger's cell phone shows the furnace through the webcam.

CARY
Clever, but...

TYGER
Clever enough that I can run down here and bust their ass.

CARY
Provided they try the same trick twice.

TYGER
True. If they detonate a nuclear bomb in the lobby, the webcam won't help.

CARY
I'll make sure the insurance is paid up.
EXT. SUTTER COTTAGE -- AFTERNOON

A loop road. A tiny cottage sits alone under dark pines.

Not far off is a small subdivision of nice houses.

The cottage looks abandoned but oddly neat. No newspapers or trash. Grass freshly mowed.


Behind is a one-car shed.

Tyger peeks in, but old boxes block her view.

    TYGER
    (to herself)
    Could be an El Camino in there. Or a dead dinosaur...

Tyger walks to the nearest house. Knocks on the screen door.

NEIGHBOR MOM comes from making supper.

    TYGER
    Hi. Sorry to interrupt. Do you know anything about that little house?

    NEIGHBOR MOM
    The Sutters. No one lives there. Mr. Sutter died and Mrs. Sutter went into a nursing home.

    TYGER
    So... Who mows the lawn?

She points across the street.

    NEIGHBOR MOM
    Jim Fairbanks. He just spins his riding mower around the yard when he does his own place.

    TYGER
    Who boned up the hand rail? Who keeps it neat?

She points to another house.

    NEIGHBOR MOM
    Sally. She just tightens up anything that's loose every spring.
TYGER
Every spring? How long has the neighborhood been watching the place?

NEIGHBOR MOM
I don't know. We've only lived here two years. Mrs. Sutter went into a nursing home before that.

TYGER
What nursing home?

NEIGHBOR MOM
I don't know. Jim might. You can call him. 4849. If you'll excuse me? I'm baking.

She goes inside. Tyger stares at the mystery house.

INT. THEATER STAGE
Tyger has a cot set up on stage with a reading light. Cary, in club clothes, prepares to leave.

CARY
I should charge you rent.

TYGER
In which case, I demand clean towels in the rest room.

CARY
How many nights do you plan to keep watch?

TYGER
Until I catch someone up to no good.

CARY
What will you do then?

TYGER
Carve out their liver with a rusty bayonet, then hang their body in the noonday sun to rot as a warning.

CARY
This town probably has an ordinance against crucifixion. But it might not be my problem much longer. I'm putting this place on the market.
TYGER
Why?

CARY
Too lean for a business, too expensive for a hobby.

Tyger strips to ratty tank top and faded bike shorts. She lays on the cot.

CARY
You're not worried about being alone?

TYGER
I'd be alone in my apartment. Here I've got something to do.

CARY
What do you usually do?

TYGER
Watch the History Channel and pound blackberry brandy.

CARY
But what else?

TYGER
There's isn't any "else". OK, I regret mistakes.

CARY
Lord, who doesn't. I'm going clubbing in Boston. Call if there's an emergency.

TYGER
Hey. What can you tell me about Evelyn Sutter of 435 Tamworth Lane?

CARY
She's one of the shareholders.

TYGER
She's the president of the corporation for this theater.

CARY
If you say so. My partner set up all the paperwork. I don't think I've ever met Mrs. Sutter.

TYGER
Who's your partner? I didn't see his/her name listed.
CARY
Silent partner.

TYGER
Who?

CARY
Toodle-o.

Cary exits.

Tyger turns on a floor lamp to read a ratty paperback about WW2.

LATER
Tyger dozes.

A muffled CLUNK (window opening) wakes her.

PETE
(soft whispers)

Tyger pulls on sneakers, grabs her big police flashlight, prowls.

INT. THEATER REAR -- NIGHT

PETE has slid up the window. He stands on a dumpster. BOY 2 is outside.

Pete Patton is a typical 15 YO boy in sloppy clothes.

Tyger sidles up in darkness.

PETE
(hisses to BOY 2)
Keep it quiet, bro.

Pete starts to climb through window.

Tyger slams the window on his back, pinning him.

PETE
Ow!

Outside, Boy 2 runs.

TYGER
Just you and me, bro.
PETE
(squashed by window)
Who are you?

TYGER
A better question is, Who are you?
You look a little young to be a serial arsonist.

PETE
A what?

TYGER
A trespasser?  B&E, misdemeanor.
Good for six months in the Youth Detention Hall.  That's a long time to get bent over the sinks in the Boys' Room.

PETE
They won't send me to jail.  You're no cop.  You're not even dressed.

TYGER
But I do I represent the property owner.  Show me some ID.

PETE
Bull.  Let me go.

Tyger leans on the window.  Pete squirms.

PETE
You can't slap me around like this.  They'll put you in jail.

TYGER
Poor me.  And I'm just trying to help a vandal stuck in a window.  ID, please.

PETE
You -- asshole.

Tyger levers a foot to mash harder.  Pete writhes.

TYGER
Kid, it's late and I'm tired.  Show me your ID and you can split.

Cursing and crying, Pete flips a wallet with school ID.

TYGER
Peter Charles Patton.
(MORE)
TYGER (CONT'D)
From a nice part of town. Shame, shame. Get lost.

Tyger lets him go. Pete runs.

PETE (O.S.)
Bitch!

TYGER
You got that right!

Tyger locks the window, but the lock is old and loose.

Sound: Distant toilet flushes upstairs.

Someone flushed a toilet on the supposedly-deserted top floor? What the hell?

Still in underwear, Tyger goes upstairs to investigate.

INT. THEATER THIRD FLOOR -- NIGHT

The third floor is partitioned into old dressing rooms full of theater junk. It's dusty and supposedly unused.

A fire door passes to the adjacent building, the old Woolworth's.

The door is propped open by a broom.

Tyger goes through, shining her FLASH.

INT. WOOLWORTH'S, THIRD FLOOR

The adjacent building is an abandoned Woolworth's. This upper floor is old offices.

Tyger finds a small restroom. Feels the sink. It's WET.

SHOT: A GHOSTLY LITTLE GIRL runs past in a nightgown.

Spooked, Tyger swings her flashlight.

TYGER
You! Freeze!

The fire door SLAMS.

Tyger runs and finds it locked.
TYGER

God damn it!

Cursing, Tyger bumbles downstairs.

Many minutes pass as she fights locked doors and obstacles.

Finally, Tyger finds a window and climbs outside.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- NIGHT

Still in her underwear, with no keys, Tyger is locked out of the theater.

TYGER

(to herself)
No keys. No cell phone. No clothes.
(yells at theater)
You better have a good excuse!

Disgusted, Tyger crosses the street for her apartment.

SOON

Dressed, with spare keys, Tyger climbs in her Jeep.

TYGER

(to herself)
Never the right tools when you need them.

EXT. GARAGE YARD -- NIGHT

Tyger drives her Jeep to the garage.

The dogs BARK inside, angry at some intruder.

Out in the junkyard, a flashlight beam plays over the smashed Firebird.

Tyger coasts her Jeep to a halt. Picks up a big wrench, unlocks the gate, and slips inside.

SOMEONE (Terry Sullivan) searches the Firebird with a flashlight.

Tyger watches, mosquitoes drilling, gets tired of waiting.

TYGER

No luck, huh?
Terry swings the flashlight and blinds her. Runs at her.
Tyger dodges but is bashed flat.
Terry raises a foot to stomp Tyger.

**TERRY**

I'll fix your ugly face.

Tyger rolls but is kicked. Tyger holds the wrench in two hands and rakes Terry'S shin. He howls.

**TYGER**

I'll kill you!

Leaping up, berserk, Tyger swings her wrench to kill him. Bats him twice. Terry's fist knocks her down.

Terry jumps atop to strangle her. Tyger rams fingers in his eyes.

**TERRY**

Aggh!

Terry swings wild, clips Tyger. Runs off. She BLACKS OUT.

**LATER**

**CHIEF UTM EYER**

Susan. Wake up. Susan.

Chief Utmeyer wakes Tyger.

**CHIEF UTM EYER**

I saw your jeep parked and the gate open. What happened?

**TYGER**

(groggy)
I don't know. But I'm going to find out.

**INT./EXT. VARIOUS**

MONTAGE as Tyger investigates:

>> In a dusty back room at the Town Hall, Tyger sifts deeds.

>> She talks to the Town Clerk.

>> She asks questions at a bank.
In her apartment, she digs through the Internet and phone book, making many calls.

Nada. She throws her notebook at her sloppy desk and goes out, SLAMS the door.

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- NIGHT
Patrons buy tickets for a movie. Cary serves popcorn.
Tyger enters, ignoring Cary, and mounts to the third floor.
But Cary looks worried she's poking around up there.

INT. THEATER, THIRD FLOOR
Tyger creeps, listening. Pulls a flashlight, searches.
Pushes on walls looking for hidden doors.
Gives up and goes back to the lobby.

INT. THEATER LOBBY -- NIGHT
Cary waits for patrons, checking his phone.

TYGER
What's the deal with the third floor?

CARY
Nothing. We don't use it.

TYGER
Someone's hiding up there.

CARY
Did you find anyone?

TYGER
No, but the place is a maze.

CARY
Even if someone were up there, it's nothing you need worry about.

TYGER
When someone's trying to burn down your precious theater?
CARY
The one thing's got nothing to do with the other.

TYGER
Jesus Christ. OK, what's the deal with Mrs. Sutter? I stopped by her house and it's abandoned. Did she move to Florida and not tell anyone?

CARY
I wouldn't know. My partner handles that.

TYGER
And you won't tell me who he is.

CARY
They have to remain anonymous.

TYGER
I hope they do burn this dump down, and I hope you're in it.

Tyger storms out.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- NIGHT
Disgusted, Tyger looks up and down the street. Thinks of something new (Pete).

TYGER
(to herself)
Maybe somebody else will.

EXT. PETE'S HOUSE -- NIGHT
A small in-town home.

Tyger knocks on the back door. PETE'S MOM comes to the door.

Pete's Mom is 40ish, neat, calm.

TYGER
Hello. Is Pete here? He applied for a job at our garage and forgot to put his telephone number on the application.
PETE'S MOM
Peter applied for a job at a garage?
Sure. Why tell his mother?
(calls upstairs)
Petey! Someone to see you.

Pete CLUMPS down the stairs, gawks.

PETE
Uh, yeah?

TYGER
You applied for a job at the garage?
We have a few more questions. Can you step out here?

PETE
Sure.

Pete and Tyger walk down the driveway, swat mosquitoes.

PETE
What do you want? I didn't do anything, really.

TYGER
I wonder. How many times have you snuck into the theater?

PETE
Just that once.

TYGER
Chill out, will you? And don't make me stand here and feed mosquitoes, I get cranky.

PETE
A few times, maybe.

TYGER
You and your cross-country bud? Did you ever see anyone else in the theater? Anyone who didn't belong?

PETE
No.

TYGER
Did you see anyone else sneaking around? Causing trouble?

PETE
We saw the owner fighting with another guy. Yelling about a gay club.
TYGER
What'd the other guy look like?

PETE
I only saw him a little. From the back. He had blonde hair. Real blonde.

TYGER
Real blonde. Long? Short?

PETE
Short.

TYGER
Young? Old? Was his voice clear and high or gravelly?

PETE
I don't know. My heart was thumpin' so loud I could barely hear anything.

TYGER
Couldn't pick him out in a lineup, huh? Ever stumble over a little girl?

PETE
No.

TYGER
OK, thanks.

Tyger turns to go.

PETE
What about the job?

TYGER
What job?

PETE
You told my mom I applied for a job at a garage.

TYGER
I had to tell her something. You're a little young to be dating.

PETE
Hey, I date. Is there really a job? I could use some money for games.
TYGER
What the hell. Maybe something'll jog your memory. Show up Monday at 9:00. Bring your lunch.

PETE
What do you pay?

TYGER
Jesus Christ. Minimum wage plus 50 cents. Take it or leave it.

Pete pulls out his cell phone.

PETE
Swap numbers.

TYGER
I don't give out my cell phone number.

PETE
Get mine. 555-6747.

Tyger punches Pete's number into her cell phone.

TYGER
There. You're 2 on the speed dial, OK?

PETE
You've only got one number on your speed dial?

TYGER
Monday.

Pete swaggers home. Shaking her head, Tyger walks off.

EXT. GARAGE YARD -- DAY

Tyger walks from the junk cars with a can of baby powder. It's empty, and she chucks it in a trash can.

Tyger wears a faded camo T-shirt with battery acid holes.

Manny is on break, taking sun, drinking a soda.

TYGER
Nothing showing today.

MANNY
You get those U-joints in Pierce's truck?
TYGER
I put in two. He needs all four, but he said no.

MANNY
"Cheap guys pay the most." A great way to go broke, running a garage.

TYGER
It's honest. More than a lot of people can say.

MANNY
You making any headway on your -- whatcha' callems?

TYGER
I've got a whole lot of people lying to my face.

MANNY
I'll stick to fixing cars.

TYGER
Speaking of which, I hired a kid to clean up around here. Starts Monday.

MANNY
He'll be busy.

LATER
The yellow Porsche drives up. Bretta with her Yorky. Manny and Tyger work.

BRETTA
Susan, I'm hosting a garden party tomorrow night.

TYGER
Huh? I thought you wanted an update on the theater. And I gotta ask. Do you know who's hiding upstairs?

BRETTA
Upstairs in the theater? No. What did Cary say?

TYGER
He denied it.

BRETTA
Then I guess we needn't worry. For the party, can you come?

(MORE)
BRETTA (CONT'D)
It'll be fun. We'll have live music and a light dinner. A chamber orchestra. First party of the summer, really.

TYGER
You're asking the wrong person.

BRETTA
Saturday night?

MANNY
We don't need her here.

BRETTA
Good. 300 Patriot Way. 7:00. Feel free to bring a friend. See you there.

Bretta drives off.

TYGER
What the hell was that?

MANNY
An invite to a party.

TYGER
Jesus. I'll have to get a haircut. And buy a dress. And what's this "She's not needed here," crap?

MANNY
It means you're free.

TYGER
Yeah, for the rest of my life. I've got half a mind to drag you along as punishment.

MANNY
I ain't a friend. I'm just someone you work with.

TYGER
What am I supposed to do at a garden party?

MANNY
Dance? Then ask questions. Somebody might know something about that arson thing. 'Sides, what'd you do last Saturday night?
TYGER
I watched trash and went to bed hammered, same as any other night.

MANNY
Sounds like she was talking to the right person.

TYGER
You're a big fat help.

Tyger gets in her Jeep and drives off.

INT. HAIR SALON -- DAY

Neat but not fancy. GLENDA, the owner, sweeps up.

Glenda is slim, 40s, with great hair.

Tyger enters in her holy T-shirt.

TYGER
I need an emergency haircut.

GLENDA
Boy, you're not kidding. Sit.

Glenda shampoos Tyger's hair.

GLENDA
Any reason all of a sudden?

TYGER
I'm going to a party.

GLENDA
Kid's party? You gonna be the clown makes the balloon animals?

TYGER
I wish. It's a garden party.

GLENDA
Ooch. Hope there's lots of liquor.

TYGER
Like I need to pass out at a party where I don't know anybody.

GLENDA
You might wake up in some cute guy's bedroom. Or cute girl's.
TYGER
No butch haircut.

Glenda steers Tyger to a chair before mirrors. Tyger hates mirrors.

GLENDA
Pixie cut? Wedge? Mullet to go with your T-shirt?

TYGER
Something I don't have to fuss with.

GLENDA
Crew cut's easy to maintain.
Pineapple's passe'. Is it me, or is your face crooked?

TYGER
I fell rock-climbing.

GLENDA
Wow. Beats my emergency hysterectomy. They did a good job putting it back together. Call it a diamond shape.
(picks up scissors)
Wish me luck.

EXT. GARAGE YARD -- EVENING

Tyger, in new haircut, new dress, and new pumps, drives to the closed yard. She carries a drug store plastic bag.

At the Firebird, she sprinkles baby powder over the wreck. Gets some on her dress.

TYGER
Son of a bitch!

She starts BAWLING and can't stop.

EXT. OLSSEN HOUSE -- NIGHT

An expensive modern house, all lit up. The garden party is out back on an extensive veranda.

In a new haircut, new dress, and black pumps, Tyger balks.

TYGER
(to herself)
"Do the thing you fear most."
INT. OLSEN HOUSE -- NIGHT

Tyger enters and is ignored.

With no other destination, she goes to the bar.

TYGER

Double Jack -- No, glass of red wine.

Bretta spots her, steers her by the arm.

BRETTA

Susan, so glad you could make it. You're going to have such a good time. Oh, I wanted to ask. Would you like to help set up the 4th of July this year?

TYGER

What? Jesus, no.

BRETTA

I'm on the organizing committee. We're hoping the governor can make it. I'll introduce her on stage before the fireworks. We need help setting up and tearing down.

TYGER

Bretta, I said no.

BRETTA

That's fine. Think it over.

BACK YARD

A chamber orchestra plays. The party is in full swing. A spirited debate goes on, people arguing civilly.

Tyger rubs her arms: it's chilly. Bretta steers her to BILL.

Bill Kennedy is a college professor, a marine biologist. 38, blonde, sunburned, plain-handsome in a silk jacket.

BRETTA

Susan, Bill. He's a marine biologist. You're a detective. Talk.

Bretta bustles off.

TYGER

Sure. Why not? You count fish?
BILL
Try to. It's a dream job. I can cite any numbers I like. Doesn't matter. Nobody believes 'em.

TYGER
Sounds like what I do. I'm really a mechanic. Whatever we do is magic. The customer'll pay anything just to get their wheels back.

BILL
Remind me not to take my car to your garage.

Bill shucks his jacket and drapes it around Tyger. She's flustered.

BILL
You looked cold.

TYGER
I, uh, was. Thank you. I'm not -- used to -- attention.

BILL
Pretty thing like you?

TYGER
You've had enough.
   (looking around)
What's the big argument?

BILL
Dunno. I live in Durham. Drink?

TYGER
Sure. Wine.

TIME PASSES

Tyger and Bill drink and talk. Tyger even LAUGHS.

The argument escalates. Tyger and Bill drift over.

Centermost is ROLF OLSEN, Bretta's husband: 60, trim, white hair, red face.

ROLF
All I'm saying is, there were plenty of sites for affordable housing out of town --
PARTY WOMAN
The whole idea is to keep people living downtown --

PARTY MAN
Insanity. Suicide. Our property values --

PARTY WOMAN 2
Nobody was using the old Woolworth's.

ROLF
As if indigents weren't responsible for their condition.

TYGER
(to herself)
"Indigents..."

PARTY MAN
With liberals nobody's responsible for anything.

PARTY WOMAN
Working poor, Rolf. Something you could never identify with.

ROLF
I made every dime I own --

TYGER
But were never poor, I'd bet.

ROLF
You must be that detective Bretta hired. She said you were --

TYGER
Indigent?

ROLF
No. A mechanic?

TYGER
Working poor, yeah.

Embarrassed silence. Bill takes her arm.

BILL
Care to dance?

TYGER
No.

Bill tows Tyger before the orchestra. The only couple.
TYGER
Get your hands off me.

BILL
C'mon. Dancing is more fun than fighting.

TYGER
Just dance me to the shadows so I can slip away.

BILL
Do you know you have beautiful brown eyes?

TYGER
They complement the grease under my fingernails.

BILL
I've got fish slime under mine.

Other couples dance. Tyger gives up and dances.

BILL
So tell me about yourself.

TYGER
Nothing to tell.

BILL
A challenge. Hmm... You like this kind of music?

TYGER
I like music where the band sets their guitars on fire.

BILL
KISS?

TYGER
Try it and I'll bust your lip.

BILL
I meant the band.

TYGER
Oh.

They talk low and dance. Bill fetches more wine and they drink. Dance more.

TIME PASSES
The party winds down. Orchestra players case instruments.

Bill has wandered off. Tyger is alone, still wearing his jacket. She confronts Bretta, who's tipsy.

TYGER
Bretta, why did you invite me here?

BRETTA
(tipsy, impish)
Funny the party should break up this early. Just as well. I have to drive to Boston tomorrow for a church charity thing. All that damned traffic. I have to take Rolf's SUV just to stay alive.

TYGER
Bretta...

BRETTA
Because I thought you'd enjoy it. Did you?

TYGER
Uh, yeah. I did. I talked to Bill, then got sucked into that stupid argument --

BRETTA
Ignore Rolf. He's an opinionated ass. You got along famously with Bill.

TYGER
Yeah. Where did he --

BRETTA
He left.

Tyger shucks Bill's jacket.

TYGER
Without saying goodbye... Never mind. I still have his jacket.

BRETTA
You need to return that personally.

TYGER
OK... What's his last name? His phone number? Where does he work?
BRETTA
(grins)
You're the detective.

INT. TYGER'S APARTMENT -- MORNING

Sunday morning, very early.

Tyger sleeps in her underwear, curled up in a messy bed like a child.

Her CELL PHONE RINGS. Hammers her hangover. She grabs it.

TYGER
God. Jesus.
(into phone)
What?

BRETTA
(on phone)
Susan, it's Bretta. I hate to impose, but can you help me? My car won't start.

TYGER
What? The Porsche? Take it back. Tell the Pope.

BRETTA
No. Rolf's Escalade. I need it desperately to go into Boston for a meeting, you see --

TYGER
Fine, fine. Detroit engineering I understand. Gimme, Jesus God, fifteen minutes.

EXT. OLSEN HOUSE

Bretta, in a crisp summer suit, waits by the big Escalade. Tyger rattles up in her Jeep, very hung over.

BRETTA
Good morning, Susan. I really appreciate --

TYGER
Bretta, please. Just let me look at the car.
BRETTA
I might even tell you Bill's last name --

TYGER
Screw Bill. Now shut up or I'll go home rather than disgrace myself in your driveway.

Bretta keeps quiet. Tyger snags the keys, climbs in the Escalade, and tries to start it. It just clicks.

Sound: Engine ignition clicks.

TYGER
Spark.

BRETTA
What?

Tyger pulls the hood latch, opens the hood.

TYGER
Spark or fuel. Engines run on two things: spark and fuel. Used to be. Nowadays the computer screws everything up. So we need to reset that.

BRETTA
I know how to do that.

Bretta goes into the HOUSE.

Shading her eyes against sun-glare, Tyger climbs the bumper to peek at the engine.

Bretta returns with a second set of keys.

BRETTA (O.S.)
This remote-thingy resets the computer if you turn the key the wrong way --

Headfirst under the hood, Tyger spots the problem.

CLOSE ON: Four sticks of DYNAMITE are wired to the starter!

BRETTA (O.S.)
You push this button and hold for thirty seconds --

Tyger dives off the car, tackles Bretta behind a stone wall --

-- As the Escalade EXPLODES.
Tyger and Bretta stare at the smoking blast site.

TYGER
I found your problem.

INT. GARAGE -- DAY

Tyger works on one car, Manny another.

A police car pulls in. Chief Utmeyer enters.

CHIEF UTMJEYER
You can release the Pontiac. The Firebird. Insurance company's done with it.

TYGER
Release it where? It's totaled. Doesn't anyone get that? Hey, did Bomb Squad report in yet?

CHIEF UTMJEYER
(scoffs)
We're talking the state.

TYGER
You know anything about squatters hiding in the theater?

CHIEF UTMJEYER
You mean kids partying?

TYGER
A little girl like a ghost. Using the toilet in the middle of the night. Too small to be alone.

CHIEF UTMJEYER
What's the owner say?

TYGER
Not to worry. The outside doors are locked by night.

MANNY
Old building like that, half the town'd have keys.

TYGER
And loose windows.
CHIEF UTMeyer
The Affordable Housing Committee runs tours through there all the time, trying to drum up investors. The place is a sieve. I'll talk to the owner. Hate to have a historic site burn down because some kids are playing Black Sabbath with candles.

Chief Utmeyer drives off.

TYGER
Who gets the Firebird? The kid's still in the hospital, right? Does the family want it?

MANNY
Kid's mom says she hates the damned thing, never wants to see it again.

TYGER
Happy to oblige.

Tyger grabs the mask, gloves, and cutting torch and drags it outside.

EXT. GARAGE YARD -- DAY

At the Firebird, Tyger checks baby powder sprinkled on the car.

CLOSE ON: Baby powder shows raccoon prints.

TYGER
Raccoons.

She dons mask and gloves and sparks the cutting torch. Tyger cuts the car into pieces, searching each piece. Tyger cuts loose the hood and shoves it aside. A rental SUV pulls in. Rolf Olsen gets out.

ROLF
Susan, is it? Bretta was right. I want you to investigate who planted that bomb in my car.

TYGER
The Greenies, county sheriff, and local police force all have stiff dicks for it, for free.
ROLF  
An extra pair of eyes can't hurt. I take threats on my life very seriously.

TYGER  
How many threats on your life do you get?

ROLF  
None.

TYGER  
So what's changed? Did you piss anyone off? Cut off a car in traffic? Bankrupt a pillar of the community? Dump widows and orphans in the streets? You're an investment banker, right?

ROLF  
No. I'm a consultant. I work with cutthroats, not killers.

TYGER  
Get me a list of everyone who attended the party, and all the hired help. I'll start there.

ROLF  
What good will that do?

TYGER  
Whoever wired the bomb either did it before the party started, while the party was on, or after in the middle of the night. But probably not during.

ROLF  
Why not?

TYGER  
People mill around at parties. They pee in your bushes and sneak around corners to smoke dope or grab a quickie, or just stroll under the moonlight. Looks kind of funny if you're under the hood with a flashlight and dynamite.

ROLF  
You're not taking this very seriously.
TYGER
Get me that list and you'll see serious.

Unsatisfied, Rolf leaves in his rented SUV.

TYGER
(to herself)
Arrogant prick. Like he cares -

CLOSE ON: A sparkle deep in the air vent.

Tyger picks out a silver earring. The loop is stained with blood.

TYGER
Here's the earring. Where's the ear?

Tyger carefully buttons the earring in her shirt pocket.

INT. HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Tyger strides through the hospital, sweating about bad memories.

The ICU is walled off by glass.

A NURSE studies Tyger with clinical interest.

TYGER
Chuck St. Amour?

NURSE
Immediate family members only.

Chuck St. Amour (the Firebird driver) is bandaged like a mummy.

Beside him sits Danielle: 17 YO, dark, weepy.

TYGER
Chuck's wife?

NURSE
Therapy.

Tyger's nerve is cracking. She sweats buckets. Nurse stares.

TYGER
I spent -- way too much time in a hospital.
Tyger waits until the Nurse moves away and ducks in the door.

TYGER
(fake cheery)
How ya feeling?

CHUCK
(drugged, puzzled)
Better, thanks.

TYGER
Glad to hear it.
(summons Danielle)
Out here, hon.

Confused but obedient, Danielle joins Tyger in the hall. Danielle is strung tight.

TYGER
Your name?

DANIELLE
Danielle -- Normandin.

TYGER
You're Chuckie's girlfriend?

DANIELLE
Yes.

TYGER
Or Terry's?

DANIELLE
Um...

Tyger shows Danielle the earring. No recognition.

TYGER
Yours?

Danielle shakes head: No.

TYGER
Know where I found it?

DANIELLE
In Chuckie's car? Yeah, it's mine.

Danielle reaches for the earring. Tyger keeps it.

TYGER
You'd have said so right away. Whose is it?
DANIELLE
It must be -- Linda's.

TYGER
Linda who?

DANIELLE
Linda... Ruggieri. Chuck's girlfriend. But she ran away. Left town.

TYGER
Another missing female.

Terry arrives, Danielle's ride. His face is scratched from brawling in the garage yard.

Terry is angry to see Tyger, but even more ticked that Danielle is mooning over Chuck.

He grabs Danielle's arm.

DANIELLE
Ow. Terry.

TERRY
Shut up.
(to Tyger)
What are you doing here?

TYGER
Selling Girl Scout cookies. Chuckie's on solid food.
(watches)
He'll be out soon.

Growling, Terry drags off Danielle.

NURSE
Visiting hours are --

TYGER
I know. I used to live here.

INT. RUGGIERI HOUSE -- EVENING

Tyger rings. MRS. RUGGIERI answers. The television blares.

Mrs. Ruggieri is 45 YO, chunky, cheap, smoking and stoned.

MRS. RUGGIERI
Christ. Do you ever wash your face?
TYGER
Mrs. Ruggieri?

MRS. RUGGIERI
You here for Linda? Because she hasn't been gone long enough.

TYGER
Long enough for what?

MRS. RUGGIERI
To call for money. Or a ride home.

TYGER
She's taken off before?

MRS. RUGGIERI
All the time. It's just to get my goat.

TYGER
May I see her room?

MRS. RUGGIERI
Who are you?

TYGER
Someone who cares about Linda.

MRS. RUGGIERI
We all care about Linda.

TYGER
Then may I see her room?

LINDA'S ROOM

Linda's room is a typical teen's, cuteness and disaster.

TYGER
What's missing?

Mrs. Ruggieri opens the closet. The top shelf is bare.

MRS. RUGGIERI
Her suitcase. A week's supply of panties and bras. Some clothes. She could never take them all. And Mister Bear. She still sleeps with him.

TYGER
Who was she going with lately?
MRS. RUGGIERI
I don't know. She's popular with all the boys. Are you from the school?

TYGER
No, ma'am.

She flinches at "Ma'am".

MRS. RUGGIERI
You better go.

Mrs. Ruggieri lurches downstairs. Tyger follows.

Tyger stops in the front hall.

TYGER
Exactly when did Linda leave?

MRS. RUGGIERI
Sunday afternoon? I had a date. There was a note on the table.

TYGER
May I see it?

MRS. RUGGIERI
Jesus, you're a nosy thing.

KITCHEN
The kitchen is a mess. Linda's school papers, years old, cover the fridge door.

Mrs. Ruggieri gives a scrap to Tyger and pulls a beer.

TYGER
(reading note)
"Momster. Going away for a while. Will call soon. Don't worry about me. Love, Lindster." As if a mother would worry when her daughter runs away. When did you last see her?

MRS. RUGGIERI
Friday morning. She bitched when I ate the last muffin.

TYGER
You saw her Friday morning. She came and packed Sunday afternoon while you were out. Can I get her phone number?
MRS. RUGGIERI
I don't know it. And didn't I ask you to leave?

TYGER
I'm gone.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- EVENING
Tyger sits in her Jeep thinking. Thumbs 2 on her phone.
At his house, Pete plays a video game.
INTERCUT between them.

TYGER
(on phone)
Peter Charles Patton. Susan Blake.
I need help with an investigation.
You go to the high school, right?

PETE
(on phone)
No, I go to the academy because I'm an A student and my father's a billionaire.

TYGER
Pete, if you're gonna succeed in law enforcement, you need to give straight answers. You go to the high school?

PETE
Sure do.

TYGER
Great. I need to know about Linda Ruggieri, another student. She might have run off.

PETE
What am I supposed to find out?

TYGER
Everything, and if she really ran off. I'd do it myself, but I don't have time to go undercover as a cheerleader.

PETE
Our cheerleaders suck anyway. OK. I'll ask around.
TYGER
Make it quick and I'll reward you with a pile of money.

PETE
How big a pile?

TYGER
Enough to buy yourself a Lamborghini and your mother a Lexus.

PETE
Detectives have to give straight answers.

TYGER
Detectives carry guns, Pete. Do the teenage thing. Network.

PETE
Got it.
(to video game)
Eat flaming death, you rat-bastard.

INT. TYGER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT
Tyger sleeps.
Her CELL PHONE RINGS. Tyger jerks awake, grabs it.

TYGER
(on phone)
Whoever you are, eat flaming death.

PETE
(on phone)
It's me. Pete. Your partner.

TYGER
At 3 AM?

PETE
Linda Ruggieri is gone. No one's seen her since Friday. Or talked to her on the phone.

TYGER
You get her cell phone number? Gimme.

Tyger scribbles down Linda's phone number.
PETE
I don't get it. Where's Linda supposed to be?

TYGER
She might not be anywhere.

PETE
Money.

TYGER
Send me an invoice.

PETE
A what?

Tyger hangs up and dials Linda's number.

LINDA
(voice mail message)
Hey, hoo, you know who. Leave a message.

Tyger hangs up.

Awake, she dresses.

EXT. GARAGE YARD -- NIGHT

DOGS, locked in the garage, BARK.

At the Firebird, by flashlight, Tyger picks up a handful of shattered windshield glass.

TYGER
(to herself)
Unbelievable. Me, of all people.

EXT. GARAGE -- NIGHT

Tyger opens the garage door. Bruno and Fido bound out.

TYGER
C'mon, guys. Bring your noses.

Tyger loads the two dogs in her Jeep.
EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT
Tyger drives to the crash site. It's deserted and dark.
Dogs bound out. Tyger shines her flash.
A stone wall has rocks knocked down -- a gap.
Tyger WHISTLES the dogs.
In a tiny clearing, leaves cover fresh dirt.
Dogs dig and uncover --
-- LINDA RUGGIERI, dead.
One earlobe is torn. The other holds a silver earring.

INT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT
Cops phone and type. Mrs. Ruggieri sobs in BG. Miffed COPS glare at Tyger.
Chief Utmeyer finishes taking Tyger's statement.

CHIEF UTMeyer
You could'a clued us in. Why make us look bad?

TYGER
I was curious. I found an earring and wondered what happened to the rest of the girl.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Curiosity killed the cat.

TYGER
(suddenly hot)
And women get chewed up and spit out every day of the week, and nobody cares.

CHIEF UTMeyer
That's what the police are for.

TYGER
Which part?
CHIEF UTMeyer
You can forget the recommendation
for the PI license.

TYGER
I never asked for one.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Hit the road.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- NIGHT
Tyger walks to her apartment.

Passes the theater. It's closed. People peer, wondering
why.

Puzzled, Tyger looks at her cell phone.

CLOSE ON: Time is 8:40.
Tyger jumps in her Jeep and drives.

EXT. APARTMENTS -- NIGHT
Tyger BUZZES Cary's apartment number. No answer.

BUZZES the Apartment Manager.

APT MANAGER
(over intercom)
What?

TYGER
(into intercom)
Romney Police. We're making a
wellness check on Cary Foye.

APT MANAGER
Why? It's not like he's elderly.

TYGER
He's had death threats, bomb scares.
We just want to check. He doesn't
answer his buzzer.

APT MANAGER
He'd be at the movie house.
TYGER
It's closed. Open his apartment, will you?

APT MANAGER
Oy. Wait a minute.

APARTMENT MANAGER opens door.

Apartment Manager is a nondescript guy 60 YO.

APT MANAGER
You're not a Cop.

TYGER
Detective. Cary's apartment?

APT MANAGER
I know all the cops. You're not a detective.

TYGER
Hey, he's missing. Open up.

APT MANAGER
Man alive. Anything to make you go away.

INT. CARY'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Apartment Manager unlocks the door.

APT MANAGER
I'm watching you.

Tyger enters. Apartment Manager FOLLOWS.

TYGER
Watch him.

CARY LIES DEAD on his couch.

A bottle of whiskey and empty bottle of pills stand on a table.

TYGER
Cary, you idiot.

INT. UNIVERISITY OFFICE -- EARLY EVENING

A Marine Biology office has fish models and ocean charts.
Bill Kennedy sits working.

His silk jacket FLOPS on his desk. Bill smiles.

BILL
How'd you find me?

TYGER
You're a Marine Biologist. One college, one department, two Bills, one with blonde hair -- Doctor Kennedy.

BILL
So you really are a detective.

TYGER
No, I really am not. But I am glad to find someone alive for a change.

BILL
I heard something on the radio. You found a missing girl?

TYGER
A dead girl. Who nobody cared was missing. And a gay guy, same thing.

BILL
Terrible. You want to split a pizza?

TYGER
Does the place have a liquor license?

EXT. CAMPUS

Tyger leads Bill to her old Jeep.

BILL
You steal this from a museum?

TYGER
It was my grandfather's. Which way?

Tyger drives. Bill picks up artifacts: a WWII helmet, bullet casings, a big knife. Students point.

BILL
So you really are a mechanic.

TYGER
More than you're a real doctor.
BILL
You got that right. I couldn't dig a splinter out of a baboon's ass. Turn right. Were you close to your grandfather?

TYGER
Only one in the world who was. But let's talk about something else, OK?

EXT. PIZZA PARLOR
Tyger and Bill get out of her Jeep.

BILL
You just leave it sitting like that? Students'll steal anything. That helmet --

TYGER
I've got 16 more.

BILL
16 more helmets?

TYGER
Helmets, uniforms, campaign maps, dummy grenades, canvas webbing, blood-chit scarves, broken radios, Lucky Strike K-ration cigarettes, an M1, a Thompson submachine gun, a 155 mm shell, and forty-two boxes of books that stink of cigarettes.

BILL
Jeez. All I inherited was money.

INT. PIZZA PARLOR
Bill orders pizza and brings a pitcher of beer. Bill slumps.

BILL
Sorry. I had to pull hand lines out by Star Island before dawn.

TYGER
And what did you catch?

BILL
Readings, data. Would you believe the coastal Atlantic is polluted?
TYGER
You need a PhD to tell that?

BILL
No, I need a PhD to get people to listen.

TYGER
You said they don't.

BILL
Let's talk about something else, OK?

TYGER
OK. Why did Bretta set us up? And how come you knew beforehand?

BILL
Wow. Uh, Bretta thought we'd be a good match.

TYGER
Why?

BILL
I'm not sure. We're about the same age? Matchmakers work on hunches.

TYGER
(growing angry)
But why me? What'd she say about me?

BILL
That she just met you, that you seemed like a really interesting person, that she felt sorry for you --

Tyger pours her beer back in the pitcher and walks out.

EXT. PIZZA PARLOR
Angry, Tyger clashes gears and swivels to back up --
-- Except Bill stands behind her Jeep, blocking her.

TYGER
Move.

BILL
My bad.

Tyger rocks the Jeep. Students watch the drama.
BILL
I don't feel sorry for you. Bretta did. I do think you're an interesting person.

TYGER
Move or I'll break your knees.

BILL
No, I don't think you will. Look, can we at least finish the pizza? You said you were hungry.

Boxed in, Tyger stops the Jeep. They go back inside.

INT. PIZZA PARLOR

Tyger sits. Bill is wary of spooking a wild animal.

TYGER
Don't expect me to stay for spumoni.

BILL
Honest. That was Bretta, not me.

TYGER
I won't put up with pity. It makes me want to crawl under a rock.

BILL
I can see that.

Bill fetches pizza. They eat.

TYGER
What else did Bretta say?

BILL
She said you were stubborn. That's one of my dubious qualities.

TYGER
You're stubborn, all right. You came close to two broken legs. I've been in more than one fight.

BILL
(gently)
Is that how you broke your jaw?

TYGER
No.
BILL
It's hardly noticeable. I'm more entranced by your big beautiful eyes.
(gets a glare)
They're not your only asset, of course. You have great posture, very dignified, yet sexy.

TYGER
I walk like a dyke, according to lesbians.

BILL
Oh, no, honey. You walk just fine.
And I love the way you hold your chin up... Etc.

Bill slathers on compliments. Tyger listens without comment, hungry for human contact.

EXT. PIZZA PARLOR
Tyger and Bill stagger out drunk. Lurch against the Jeep.

BILL
Woof. I'm bombed. Or maybe I'm drunk on your beauty. So... Stop by my place for a nightcap?

Tyger grabs his shirt. Bill panics, momentarily thinking she'll pound him.

Instead Tyger tows Bill to a grassy spot under a tree.

Shoves him over and jumps on top and rips open his shirt.

BILL
(looking around)
It's a little -- busy.

TYGER
It's a college campus. Let's cram for Biology.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT -- MORNING
A good-sized apartment, neat.

Tyger and Bill lounge in bed.
TYGER
How many other women have you lured into this lair?

BILL
I usually lure them onto my yacht. I sail them out to my secret pirate grotto, use them mercilessly, then leave their bodies for the hermit crabs.

TYGER
So everyone wins.

BILL
When was the last time you did this? You were -- insatiable.

TYGER
Three years. Before --

Tyger abruptly rises and dresses.

BILL
What are you doing Friday night?

TYGER
Not sure. I might be busy.

BILL
Saturday?

TYGER
I'm not the type to sit by the phone and pine.

BILL
Good. I'm not very dependable.

TYGER
One more thing in common.

BILL
Oh. One more thing Bretta and I talked about. Detectives find people, right?

In the bathroom, Tyger uses Bill's toothbrush without asking. And spits a lot, angry with herself.

TYGER
That's 90 percent of it, yeah.
BILL
Could you find someone if you knew her last known address?

TYGER
Her?

BILL
A student. Edvarda Tyson. Really promising, almost a protege. Intrigued by Marine Biology. But she disappeared one day, never came back to class. No calls, no email, nothing.

TYGER
She fall off a boat?

BILL
No, just didn't come to class anymore.

TYGER
College students have been known to drop out.

BILL
True. But you know how it is.

No.

BILL
Most of the students you lecture just stare out the window or sleep. Then, once in a great while, you get the student who sits in the front row and hangs on every word, writes reams of notes, asks intelligence questions... I wanted to recommend her to graduate school.

TYGER
So you want me to find Edvarda Tyson.

BILL
I just want to ask her to consider continuing in Marine Bio. What do you charge for an investigation, anyway?

TYGER
I'm not a real detective. They denied my license application.
BILL

Please?

TYGER

$250 a day plus expenses.

Bill kisses Tyger's cheek.

TYGER

I can't feel anything in my cheeks, you know.

BILL

Too bad. Do you have everything you need? To find Edvarda?

TYGER

I have everything I need.

EXT. GARAGE YARD -- DAY

Tyger works.

Manny tows in the Detroit clunker of Nicole, the Texan.

Tyger peers in. It's full of trash and some ratty stuffed animals.

TYGER

This is the clunker the Dixie Chick was driving. I replaced the fuel filter. What's it doing here?

MANNY

It was parked in the hospital garage. Cops called to impound it.

TYGER

Then where's Texas Tessie and Bunny Slippers?

INT./EXT. DAY, VARIOUS

MONTAGE shots as Tyger tracks down Edvarda...

>> At the Registrar's Office, Tyger shows a fake PI license. A CLERK prints Edvarda Tyson's address and number.

>> In a borrowed car, Tyger dials 411. Gets several Tysons in Watertown, dials over and over. No Edvarda.
Tyger drums the wheel, checks her watch, finally drives.

In Watertown, Massachusetts, Tyger finds the address. The house is empty with a "FOR SALE" sign on the lawn.

Tyger calls the Real Estate office, talks, gets the seller's number. Dials.

TYGER

(into phone)
Hello. May I speak with Edvarda, please?
(waits)
Edvarda? Hi. I represent the University of New Hampshire. Could I swing by for a minute? We'd like an update on your status.
(listens)
Yes, it's unusual, but we like to be thorough. What's your address there?
(punches GPS)
Great. Ten minutes.

INT. APARTMENT HALLWAY -- DAY

Tyger knocks on an apartment door. EDVARDA answers.

Edvarda Tyson is a 19 YO mixed-race beauty, a jaw-dropping child-woman. Tyger's heart sinks.

TYGER

Edvarda Tyson?

EDVARDA

Yeah. Hey, I'm sorry I just quit school like that, but my father died and my mom needed me here.

TYGER

I'm sorry for your loss. I'm actually here on behalf of Professor Kennedy. He was worried about you --

EDVARDA

Who?

TYGER

Professor William Kennedy? Marine Biology? He said you were a promising student, that he was sure you'd apply to graduate school --
EDVARDA
In Marine Biology? Yuck.

TYGER
You sat up front and took lots of notes and asked questions --

EDVARDA
I did that in every class. That's how you get As. I just took Marine Biology to satisfy a science requirement.

Tyger scribbles Bill's number on a page, gives it to Edvarda.

TYGER
I see. OK. Could you just call Professor Kennedy and tell him you're fine?

EDVARDA
Sure. I probably shouldn't have just left college like that, but I figured to go back in the fall.

TYGER
Do. Or don't. I don't care.

INT. POLICE STATION, CHIEF'S OFFICE -- DAY

Chief Utmeyer works at his computer.

Tyger walks in.

TYGER
I want to read the Bomb Squad report. And don't tell me it's not in yet. It's all over town.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Do you ever say please?

TYGER
Never.

CHIEF UTMeyer
What have you been up to?

TYGER
Found another missing girl. Alive, this time.
CHIEF UTMeyer
She commit a crime?

TYGER
She can kill with her looks.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Not my jurisdiction. What else you been up to?

TYGER
Wondering who killed Cary Foye.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Coroner's going with suicide.

TYGER
Come on. Why would Cary commit suicide?

CHIEF UTMeyer
Lots of people do. Gays especially. What's your angle?

TYGER
Nothing you haven't thought of.
(he waits)
Chief, honest, all my cards are on the table.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Just in case you can add anything.

Tyger reads the Bomb Squad Report.

TYGER
The bomber tapped a spark plug wire to trigger the dynamite, but... the anti-theft device assumed it was a hot-wire... Makes sense.

CHIEF UTMeyer
How?

TYGER
If the computer senses tampering, it doesn't sound an alarm, it just shuts down the engine until an authorized tech reboots it.

CHIEF UTMeyer
So...
TYGER
Our bomber finished up and assumed the car was ready to blow. In fact, it was dead in the water.

CHIEF UTMeyer
I'll take your word for it. I can't even find my hood latch. So whoever wanted to kill Rolf Olsen was inept.

TYGER
That's not what it says here. The bomb would have worked fine except for the computer tamper-proofing.

CHIEF UTMeyer
I'll stick with inept.

TYGER
Any reason why someone would blow up Rolf Olsen? He's just a jerk-off investment consultant in Boston, right?

CHIEF UTMeyer
We're on it.

TYGER
He was in the Army a long time ago, a desk jockey.

CHIEF UTMeyer
We know how to interrogate people.

TYGER
This doesn't wash. The bomber laid on like an expert, but missed something.

Chief points to his computer.

CHIEF UTMeyer
I can learn how to rig a car bomb on the Internet. Or how to trim fugu fish to poison someone.

TYGER
Speaking of fish... And missing women...

CHIEF UTMeyer
Make the door happy and use it, will you?
EXT. SUTTER COTTAGE -- NIGHT

Tyger sneaks to the house in darkness. (She parked up the road.)

She carries a flashlight and tire iron. She peers at lit houses not far off.

Tyger jimmies the screen door, then the front door.

Tyger shoves the front door -- but it's blocked by something. Shoving, Tyger squeezes in.

INT. SUTTER COTTAGE

Tyger finds a mountain of mail pushed through the mail slot.

The house is jammed with furniture and junk. There's only a narrow corridor through piles to other rooms.

Tyger sifts the mail, reading postmarks.

TYGER

Six years.

Tyger searches. Old magazines, newspapers, furniture piled on furniture.

The tiny bedroom has room for one bed. The bathroom is jammed. The living room has a tiny couch facing an old TV, surrounded by junk.

The kitchen is packed with egg cartons, calendars, stacked cans.

The only clear space is above the stove where a shelf tore loose. Shopping bags and junk cascaded on the floor.

Tyger's flashlight shows the wall telephone. Numbers are scribbled by the phone.

She can't reach the phone for junk. Tyger picks up shopping bags and heaps them on the dead stove. And finds under the trash --

-- MRS. SUTTER, dead, mummified.
EXT. SUTTER COTTAGE -- NIGHT

Police cars, ambulances, a fire truck are gathered.


A SNIDE COP grills Tyger. She's RATTLED.

SNIDE COP
So what exactly were you doing in this house again?

TYGER
I broke in. I admit it. Christ, has anybody got a cigarette?

An EMT gives her a cigarette. Tyger's hand shakes so badly she bobbles the cigarette. EMT offers another.

TYGER
Never mind. I don't smoke.

SNIDE COP
So would you care to explain --

TYGER
Look. You can't book me. There's no criminal intent. I'm investigating Mrs. Sutter's disappearance. And Mr. Sutter's. I canvassed the neighbors. I searched tax bills and bank statements and death records. I called nursing homes. Nothing. So I broke in to find some names or addresses.

SNIDE COP
Which is against the law.

TYGER
It's more than the neighbors did. Taking care of the house and never caring about the owner dead inside.

Firefighters and Cops open the shed. They tow out a bronze El Camino.

Tyger points to the shed's dirt floor.

Under the car is a shallow grave.
TYGER
There's Mr. Sutter. That woman never threw anything away.

SNIDE COP
This what you were after?

TYGER
Save it. Where were the cops six years ago? Mrs. Sutter was a citizen, lonely and afraid, and she died without anyone knowing --

EMTs bring dead Mrs. Sutter out on a stretcher.

EMT
Christ. Like ripping up old linoleum.

Tyger RETCHES and staggers for her Jeep.

INT. BILL'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT
Tyger RAPS on the door. Bill opens in his bathrobe.

BILL
Susan.

TYGER
I know it's late, but I have to talk to someone. I found another dead woman.

Bill looks over his shoulder.

BILL
This isn't the best time. I've got a review tomorrow --

TYGER
The thing is, it's me they're going to find dead some day. Dead in my apartment and cats ate my face. I can't -- There's nobody --

EDVARDA (O.S.)
Bill, honey?

Edvarda Tyson comes to the door, half-naked.

Tyger glares. Bill squirms.

Tyger storms off.
INT. PAT'S CAFE -- NIGHT

Men shout over loud country music. A few wives and hookers are present.

Tyger sits at the bar pounding blackberry brandy. She's drunk.

WENDY is a middle-aged tired barmaid.

TYGER
Gimme another, Wendy.

WENDY
Are you driving?

TYGER
No.

WENDY
It's too far for you to walk home, Sue.

TYGER
Gimme another brandy or I'll come get it myself. I haven't drunk to Cary Foye yet, and the list keeps getting longer.

Wendy brings another brandy. Tyger SLURPS and almost pukes.

She staggers for the rest room.

SOON

The rest room hallway is narrow. The back wall has frosted windows.

Tyger stumbles from the bathroom, having puked.

A JERK blocks the hall.

Jerk is 25 YO, in black, with a neat beard. He smirks.

JERK
You all right, little lady? Need a hand?

TYGER
(slurred)
Let me by. Please.
JERK  
(mocking)  
Please. You definitely need a hand.

Jerk reaches for Tyger's arm. She flips his hand off.

TYGER  
Don't touch.

JERK  
Women never really mean that.

Jerk feints, catches Tyger's ribs -- and breast.

TYGER  
Don't touch!

Tyger RAMS her palm into Jerk's chin. His head HITS a window.

Berserk, Tyger HAMMERS his head repeatedly. GLASS BREAKS. Blood runs.

TYGER  
Don't touch! Don't touch! Don't touch!

Several guys mob her.

She KICKS, BITES, and PUNCHES until they pin her under bodies.

INT. POLICE STATION, CHIEF'S OFFICE -- NIGHT

Chief Utmeyer is disgusted. Tyger slumps, worn out.

Her hands are bandaged, cheek bruised, nose bloodied.

CHIEF UTMEYER  
You can't keep this up, Susan. You're a poster child for PTSD.

TYGER  
Be honest, Chief. At least be honest.

CHIEF UTMEYER  
What's that mean?

TYGER  
You always treat me like some old fart who was a cop for life and retired with a gold watch. When in fact I'm a twisted nut case and criminal who was kicked off the force. (MORE)
TYGER (CONT'D)
Charge me or let me go. I need some sleep.

CHIEF UTMeyer
You're charged. The guy whose head you remodeled probably won't squawk. But the guys you bit are plenty mad. They were trying to help.

TYGER
Help.

CHIEF UTMeyer
The PI petition is out the window.

TYGER
"That was just a dream some of us had."

CHIEF UTMeyer
And I guarantee you'll be remanded to Anger Management Counseling.

TYGER
If they can find one. I nearly strangled my last counselor. "Let's imagine a safe place, Susan. Somewhere peaceful and serene where no one can hurt you." What an asshole.

CHIEF UTMeyer
It wouldn't kill you to show a little humanity.

TYGER
You men don't get it, do you? Every woman in the world is angry all the time.

CHIEF UTMeyer
You're right. I don't get it.
(into intercom)
Send in a female officer.

BOOKING DESK

Weary, Tyger hands over personal effects to FEMALE COP, including a wrench and screwdriver.

Her CELL PHONE RINGS. Female Cop nods.
TYGER
(into phone)
Susan Blake.

BRETTA
(on phone)
Susan? This is Bretta. Olsen. I'm afraid I have bad news. I won't be needing your services anymore. You can, uh, send me a bill. I'm sorry things didn't work out. Goodbye.

Bretta hangs up.

TYGER
My one phone call, and it's a wrong number.

Tyger drops her cell phone in the bag.

JAIL CELL

Female Cop escorts Tyger into a cell.

FEMALE COP
Sure you don't want a phone call? That one didn't count.

TYGER
No one to call.

FEMALE COP
You get three meals a day. Exercise at 10 and 2 --

Tyger settles on a cot, infinitely weary.

TYGER
I know the routine. Just leave me alone.

Alone in her cell, Tyger CRIES.

MORNING

Female Cop comes in.

FEMALE COP
Susan? You can go. Someone posted bail.

TYGER
Who would do that?

BOOKING DESK
Manny waits. Female Cop gives Tyger her personal effects.

TYGER
You didn't have to do this.

MANNY
I can't do the paperwork.
(beat)
I never bailed anybody out of jail before.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET

Manny drove the tow truck. They lean against it.

Down the street, VOLUNTEERS hang bunting for the 4th of July.

TYGER
Why aren't you at the garage?

MANNY
We gotta get you a - something.
Today's the 4th of July. I heard you found Mrs. Sutter.

TYGER
(shudders)
Oh, yeah.

MANNY
Maybe we can get that El Camino at police auction.

TYGER
Damned thing is probably haunted. Somebody got good use out of her, though.

MANNY
Eh?

TYGER
Somebody appointed Mrs. Sutter president of a dummy corporation, dead as she was.

MANNY
That thing you found on the computer?
Is that why Cary killed himself?

TYGER
Cary didn't kill himself.
(MORE)
TYGER (CONT'D)
Someone helped him. If you plan to scam hell out of people, you don't incorporate with your name and Social Security number. You find someone alive but not working: usually an old person. Scan the obituaries and find a guy who died and left a widow. Call her and spin a tale about paying out a life insurance policy to get her SS number.

MANNY
So who's scamming who?

TYGER
Cary Foye's silent partner, must be. He set up the corporation that owns the Bijou Theater. At some point he had to contact all the part-owners, so he sent out registered letters. Mrs. Sutter's bounced back. So the scammer figured she was dead or senile somewhere.

MANNY
All that just to sell a building?

TYGER
No. Once you have a phony corporation, you take out credit cards and bank loans and small business loans and then default on them. Rook in investors. Burn the theater and collect the insurance.

MANNY
The things I missed not going to business school.

TYGER
It's always money.

MANNY
So who's this silent partner?

TYGER
Could be anyone.

MANNY
Not if they know all that stuff.

TYGER
OK, someone at the center. (MORE)
TYGER (CONT'D)
Bretta runs the Romney Affordable Housing Committee. They were trying to buy both buildings -- Hang on. Rolf Olsen was on that committee too. He helps with the paperwork.

MANNY
Paperwork.

TYGER
Rolf Olsen runs an investment firm. He'd know how to run scams... I gotta find Bretta.

Down the street are 4th of July preparations.

MANNY
She's running the 4th of July show. But didn't she fire you?

Tyger trots to the park.

EXT. PARK -- MORNING
In the park is a temporary stage. Bretta helps string bunting.

Tyger mounts the stage, confronts Bretta, who's ashamed.

TYGER
Bretta, did Rolf order you to fire me?

BRETTA
Not exactly. Rolf and I just -- decided it's a waste of money --

TYGER
Jesus, Bretta, I thought you had spine. I thought you had bottom.

BRETTA
What?

TYGER
All your crap about empowering women and poor people, and you're just another pathetic pussy who gets pushed around by her husband.

BRETTA
I won't be talked to --
TYGER
Zip it. Tell me about the mother and daughter hiding in the theater.

BRETTA
Shh. That doesn't matter now. They're gone.

TYGER
Wrong. I've got their car in pound at the garage.

BRETTA
What? Damn it.

TYGER
What's the deal?

Bretta takes Tyger aside, WHISPERS.

BRETTA
I'm a member of an underground railroad.

TYGER
Bretta, grab the reins.

BRETTA
It's true. It spans the country. We hide women and children fleeing abusive husbands. Where the courts are wrong and give the fathers unsupervised visitation when we know they molest the children? The mothers keep moving and we help them.

TYGER
Aiding and abetting fugitives from justice.

BRETTA
Helping people. My first husband --

TYGER
Geoffrey Boot.

BRETTA
My God. Yes. Geoff was abusive, but very smooth. He fooled the judge, the social workers, CASA workers. I had to hide until our daughter was majority. That's how I learned about the railroad. That's why I'm committed to affordable housing --
TYGER
So you're Harriet Tubman? You hid this mother and daughter on the third floor of the theater? With Cary's approval?

BRETTA
Being gay, he was sympathetic to persecution.

TYGER
Show me.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET

Bretta and Tyger walk to the theater down the street.

TYGER
So who are these fugitives?

BRETTA
Nicole and Ashley. We don't use last names. They're from Texas. But they were supposed to leave days ago. I set up their next stop and gave them money and a map --

TYGER
And sent them to my garage for service.

BRETTA
We use independent garages. They're less likely to enter names or license plates in a national database.

TYGER
This Nicole. Did you cut her a key to the theater?

BRETTA
A copy, yes. I asked for it back, but she'd lost it.

TYGER
Mother of Mercy. Bretta, could you be any dumber?

BRETTA
Susan.
TYGER
Bretta. People who dodge the law
are lousy at following instructions.
Nicole kept your key and has been
living in the theater.

BRETTA
Why would she do that?

TYGER
Maybe she liked the downtown or met
a boyfriend or was hoping to score
or found a job. The point is she
scuttled your plans.

From a ring of many keys, Bretta unlocks the theater.

BRETTA
Poor Cary.

INT. THEATER, THIRD FLOOR

Bretta and Tyger enter the third floor, a maze of old-
fashioned dressing rooms.

TYGER
I searched this floor.

Bretta opens a HIDDEN DOOR to reveal --

-- A SAFE ROOM.

The hidden safe room is strewn with clothes and food wrappers.

BRETTA
Oh, dear. This room was probably
left over from Prohibition. Or hid
underage girls who shouldn't have
been working in the theater.

TYGER
Just as trashy as the car.

BRETTA
They must be out celebrating
Independence Day. I could spit.
Nicole violated my trust.

TYGER
You seem to collect people who do.

BRETTA
What's that supposed to mean?
TYGER
Husband #1, smooth on the outside, bastard on the inside. Husband #2, no comment. This ingrate Nicole, taking a chance on blowing your cover and sending you to jail --

BRETTA
Don't you have any compassion?

TYGER
I used it up on Husband #1. As for Rolf, I came looking for you to answer some questions --
(new thought)
Hang on.

Tyger tows Bretta down the stairs.

INT. THEATER CELLAR

Tyger opens the cellar door, takes out her cell phone, flips the light switch and --

-- Shakes her cell phone when it does NOT ring.

TYGER
Terrific.

Tyger props cinder blocks and checks the webcam.

CLOSE ON: The wire is disconnected but propped in place.

BRETTA
What are you doing?

TYGER
Three guesses who you told about this webcam.

Tyger reconnects the wire. Her CELL PHONE immediately RINGS. The webcam is working.

BRETTA
I told Rolf.

TYGER
For a woman who's good at keeping secrets, you're pathetic. I can't believe -- Oh, crap.

BRETTA
What now?
TYGER
If Rolf is the silent partner, he'd have keys to the theater. He argued with Cary in the office. To a nervous kid white hair could look blonde.

BRETTA
What are you talking about?

TYGER
Rolf is running a scam. Or several scams.

BRETTA
I really don't want to know --

TYGER
You really do. The night of the party, you planned to drive Rolf's SUV into Boston the next day.

BRETTA
The Escalade was safer in traffic.

TYGER
And that night someone wired a bomb to the engine.

BRETTA
And it still gives me nightmares. Why anyone would want to kill Rolf --

TYGER
Not Rolf. You.

BRETTA
No.

TYGER
Bretta, what did Rolf really do in the Army?

BRETTA
He taught -- munitions.

TYGER
How to rig bombs. But years ago, before cars had computers. Christ.

BRETTA
Oh, God. What am I going to do?

TYGER
Where can you hide?
EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET

Tyger tows Bretta to the street, then to a parking lot with Bretta's Porsche.

BRETTA
I have -- a sister in Francestown.

TYGER
Perfect. Get in your car and go straight there.

BRETTA
But I need clothes --

TYGER
Wear your sister's. Go.

BRETTA
But my dog.

TYGER
Fine. Give me your house key and the access code. And your cell phone.

BRETTA
But I need it.

TYGER
A cell phone is a GPS. It can be tracked. Write down your sister's name and number.

Flustered, Bretta gives Tyger her house key and phone, then scribbles in Tyger's notebook.

BRETTA
The alarm code is 3254. But I still don't see --

TYGER
Where's Rolf now?

BRETTA
I'm not sure. Out and about. He might've run down to the camp to air it out. Or stopped in a lawn center --

TYGER
Never mind. I'll round up Rolf and get him safely behind bars. Say hello to Sis.
BRETTA
You'll tell the police, right?

TYGER
Sure.

Tyger gently pushes Bretta into her car. Bretta drives off.

Tyger trots to her Jeep, reaches under the seat and pulls out a plastic gun case with a crappy .22 revolver. Sticks it in her belt.

EXT. WOODS

Tyger parks her Jeep in a cul-de-sac and enters a thin wood behind the Olsen house.

EXT. OLSEN HOUSE

Exiting the woods, Tyger circles Bretta's house. Sees no cars in the driveway.

Tyger punches the alarm code and enters with Bretta's key.

INT. OLSEN HOUSE

Tyger enters. Yorky greets her.

TYGER
(whispers)
Hey, big guy. All alone?

Tyger searches the house. It's empty.

Tyger finds the cellar door. Opens it. Descends.

CELLAR

The cellar is unfinished. One section has a work bench.

Tyger searches. Finds hidden dynamite and wires and timing gear.

TYGER
He could blow up the half the state.

Tyger returns upstairs.

KITCHEN - LIVING ROOM
Tyger feeds the dog, lets it outside.

TYGER
(to dog)
Too bad you're not a bloodhound.
But Rolf's gotta come home sometime, right?

In the living room, Tyger gets comfortable, out of sight on the couch. Props the gun on her chest. Yorky joins her.

TYGER
Now, shhh...

She waits and --
-- Falls asleep.

LATER

It's dark outside.

Tyger sleeps. The Yorky lies on her chest.

Her CELL PHONE RINGS. Tyger jerks awake.

CLOSE ON: Cell phone shows Rolf setting a fire in the theater furnace room.

TYGER
Jesus Christ!

Tyger runs.

EXT. OLSEN HOUSE

Tyger runs to her Jeep through the thin woods.

Jumps in and roars off, as much as the old Jeep will do.

EXT. ROAD

A small town/country road with little traffic.

Tyger drives like a maniac. Jabs her cell phone.

TYGER
(at phone)
Come on, come on.
DISPATCH
(on phone)
This is 911 Dispatch. What's your --

TYGER
This is Susan Blake. Call the Romney cops and Fire Department. Someone's setting a fire in the Bijou Theater. In the basement, torching the furnace.

DISPATCH
Is this a hoax? Because --

TYGER
No, please, it's real. Send them into that theater. Break the door down. The firebug is Rolf Olsen. Nail him --

Driving wild, Tyger SWERVES to avoid a car. BOBBLES the cell phone.

TYGER
Oh, god, not again.

BEGIN FLASHBACK

INT. CAR -- NIGHT
A younger Tyger drives by night. She's tipsy and angry. She argues with her ex-husband on her cell phone. Her daughter sits in the back seat, belted in, frightened by the speed.

Tyger snarls into the cell phone. Headlights blind them. Tyger bobbles the cell phone.

The daughter SCREAMS.

Tyger WRENCHES the wheel but --

-- The car CRASHES.

Tyger is HURLED through the windshield, ruining her face. Her DAUGHTER is KILLED.

END FLASHBACK

Driving too fast, Tyger panics at the memory of the crash.
She slows down, shaking. Then finds her resolve.

TYGER
Come on, Texas Tessie.

Tyger drives faster. Grabs the phone and presses 2.

TYGER
(at phone)
C'mon, Pete, please answer.

EXT. PARK
A CROWD mills in the park waiting for fireworks.
Hanging out, Pete's PHONE RINGS. He answers.

INTERCUT Pete in the park and Tyger in the car.

PETE
(on phone)
Wassup?

TYGER
(on phone)
Pete. This is Sue Blake. Are you in the park?

PETE
Yeah. We're just chillin' --

TYGER
Pete. Run to the theater. Try to get inside and down to the cellar. There's a maniac setting a fire.

PETE
For real?

TYGER
Go! Find him! I'm on my way!

Tyger reaches the end of the park.

FIRE ENGINE SIRENS sound in the center of town.

Crowd looks around, not sure if it's an emergency or part of the pre-fireworks show.

The park entrance is blocked by sawhorses and people.

Tyger drives her Jeep to SMASH the sawhorses, then DRIVES onto the grass.
Crowd scatters.

When she can't drive any farther, Tyger abandons the Jeep and runs.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- NIGHT

Fire-fighters break open the theater doors.

Smoke pours out.

Crowd streams from the park to see the fire.

Chief Utmeyer directs operation. Tyger runs up.

TYGER
Chief, there might be a mother and daughter inside.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Your squatters?

TYGER
Hiding on the third floor. Might be.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Might be or are? I need to know.

TYGER
I don't know for sure. They might be.

CHIEF UTMeyer
Stay put.

Chief Utmeyer runs to find fire chief.

Tyger's CELL PHONE RINGS.

CLOSE ON: Caller ID is "Pete".

TYGER
(into phone)
Pete, where are you?

Pete spots Tyger, runs up.

PETE
I couldn't get in. It's locked.
TYGER
Pete, good, you did fine.
Everything's -- Where's that loose window?

EXT. THEATER REAR

Pete and Tyger rush to the theater rear --
-- And CRASH into Rolf Olsen.

TYGER
Rolf!

PETE
Who's he?

ROLF
Susan? What are you doing here?

TYGER
You son of a --

Tyger ATTACKS Rolf. She picks a trash can and HAMMERS him.
POUNDS him, KICKS him, PUNCHES him, BASHES his head against
a dumpster.

TYGER
(beats Rolf)
Easy, huh? Fun, huh? Killing women?
Blowing them up? Burning them up?
Lying to them? Cheating, stealing,
murdering?

Pete SHOVES Tyger off Rolf.

PETE
The loose window?

Tyger comes to her senses. Rolf lies half-conscious.

TYGER
Show me.

Tyger and Pete push a dumpster under a window and climb on.
Tyger jiggers the window, gets it open.

PETE
You're going in there? The place is
burning up.
TYGER
Watch Rolf. And don't come in for anything.

Tyger enters the burning theater.

INT. THEATER, THIRD FLOOR

The floor is filled with smoke.

TYGER
(coughing)
Nicole! Ashley!

NICOLE (O.S.)
(coughing)
Here!

Tyger pulls Nicole and Ashley out of the hidden safe room.

NICOLE
We heard the sirens. We was hidin'.
Ashley's scared of fireworks --

TYGER
Yeah, yeah. You're idiots. Come on.

COUGHING, stumbling, Tyger leads Nicole and Ashley downstairs.

EXT. THEATER REAR

Tyger, Nicole, and Ashley climb out the rear window.
Pete has brought Chief Utmeyer and Fire Chief.
Square on 9:00, FIREWORKS EXPLODE overhead.
Ashley WHIMPERS and cowers.

TYGER
(to Ashley)
Don't you worry, darling. We'll keep you safe --

Tyger breaks down SOBBING.
INT. POLICE STATION -- NIGHT

Tyger sips coffee, exhausted. Turns her back on REPORTERS.

Chief Utmeyer enters.

CHIEF UTMNEYER
You can go. We'll get corroborating statements later. We're on the same side, you know.

TYGER
I'll keep that in mind.

CHIEF UTMNEYER
The state might even push through that PI license.

TYGER
Serves me right.

CHIEF UTMNEYER
You should hang around. People are lined up three deep to slap you on the back.

TYGER
All I want is a hot bath.

CHIEF UTMNEYER
Better use the back door.

INT. TYGER'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Tyger is too tired to see her lock is broken.

The door FLIES open. Terry YANKS her into the apartment.

Raging silently, Terry bear-hugs Tyger.

She KICKS a wall, KNOCKS them both against the sink.

Grabbing for a weapon, she WHAPS his head with a dish rack. Terry lets go.

Tyger grabs a dry mop, but Terry BULLS into her.

Grappling, Terry begins to STRANGLE Tyger. Bent backwards, she can't fight him off.
TERRY
Why didn't you stay out of it?

TYGER
(choking)
Terry, you can't -- punch your way out of this.

TERRY
You had to go snooping. Had to dig up Linda's body.

TYGER
They would have -- found her eventually.

TERRY
I was in the clear.

TYGER
Terry, for Christ's sake! You didn't -- pitch her through the windshield!

Confused, stunned, Terry releases Tyger.

TYGER
It's over, Terry.

TERRY
Oh, man...

BEGIN FLASHBACK

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD -- NIGHT

Same scene as opening. Two cars drag-race.

The Firebird SKIDS and SLAMS into the tree.

Terry finds Chuck shattered behind the wheel. Danielle CRIES.

In the headlights, Linda lies broken and dead, having been hurled through the windshield.

TYGER (V.O.)
The cover-up was Chuck's idea, wasn't it?

CHUCK
You gotta -- hide Linda's body, Terry. We'll go to jail if you don't.

Terry digs a shallow grave.
TYGER (V.O.)
So you buried Linda. But missed the earring.

Terry lays Linda's body in the grave.

CLOSE ON: She's missing an earring.

Terry panics, looking all around.

TYGER (V.O.)
You tried to get the wreck towed home, then you snuck in by night to search the car. But you couldn't find the earring.

GARAGE YARD -- NIGHT

Terry searches the Firebird.

TYGER (V.O.)
It went down the hood air vent. No girl could drop it there -- unless she went through the windshield.

GARAGE YARD -- DAY

Tyger finds the earring.

TYGER (V.O.)
Was it Chuck's idea to make Linda run away? Danielle snuck into her house, packed Linda's suitcase and her teddy bear, and left a note. One girl's handwriting looks like another's, especially if Mom is stoned.

MRS. RUGGIERI'S HOUSE -- DAY

Danielle sneaks into Linda's bedroom, packs a suitcase and the teddy bear, writes a note.

TYGER (V.O.)
So Linda just runs off and never comes home. Poor old Chuck is just unlucky, not guilty of negligent homicide or manslaughter.

HOSPITAL -- NIGHT

Terry seethes as Danielle comforts Chuck.

END FLASHBACK
TYGER'S KITCHEN

TERRY
I never should have gone near that goddamn wreck. But Chuck kept bugging me about it. And that stupid Linda. She probably grabbed his dick and caused the accident. She was always doing that.

TYGER
Poor ol' Chuck takes Danielle and you can't say a word. He'll just claim you buried Linda while he was unconscious.

TERRY
He gets sympathy and I get the shaft. That bastard. I hope his back stays broken. And that damned Danielle. Girls love to mother a guy who's all busted up.

TYGER
But never the other way around.

TERRY
Huh?

TYGER
Nothing.

Tyger leads Terry down to the street.

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET -- NIGHT
Tyger leads Terry outside.

And surprise! A dozen people greet her. Wendy from the cafe. Pete, her partner. A police officer. Bretta. Manny. She's mobbed and, for once, overwhelmed and happy.

FADE OUT