

T H E R O C K F O R D - F I L E S

(pilot)

By: Stephen J. Cannell

Story by: John Thomas James

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THE ROCKFORD FILES

Teleplay by
Stephen J. Cannell

Story by
John Thomas James

THE ROCKFORD FILESCAST

TOM ROCKFORD

JOSEPH ROCKFORD
 SARA BUTLER
 HARVEY BUTLER
 NICK BUTLER
 JERRY GRIMES
 MILDRED ELIAS
 DETECTIVE DENNIS BECKER
 CAPTAIN HARRY DELL
 ANGEL MARTIN

DR. RUBEN SEELMAN
 MORRIE TALBOT
 ARNOLD DEMURA
 DANFORD BAKER
 NORM MITCHELL
 DOORMAN
 OFFICER
 BLACK MAN
 MAN (MEN'S ROOM)

TAPED CASSETTE VOICE (FRENCH)

SETSEXTERIORS:

CITY STREETS
 OLD LIQUOR STORE
 DESERTED STREET
 BEACH
 OCEAN BLVD.
 POLICE STATION
 VACANT LOT WITH ROCKFORD'S
 OFFICE TRAILER
 SUNSET BLVD. COFFEE PATIO
 DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS
 MUNICIPAL BUILDING
 BIKINI SHOP
 GAS STATION
 ELIAS ESTATE/POOL AREA
 TACO STAND
 SMALL BAR
 OUTRIGGER BAR
 RESTAURANT
 JERRY GRIMES' APARTMENT
 NEWSPAPER OFFICE
 DESERTED HIGHWAY
 SMALL WEDDING CHAPEL
 LAS VEGAS HOTEL STRIP
 COMMERCIAL STREET
 DIRT ROAD
 SMALL LANDING STRIP
 PIPER APACHE
 LAS VEGAS POLICE STATION
 RESIDENTIAL STREET
 LAS VEGAS AIRPORT
 SARA'S SMALL LAUREL CANYON
 HILLSIDE HOUSE

INTERIORS:

BUS
 WATCH COMMANDER'S OFFICE
 PANELED OFFICE
 ANGEL MARTIN'S OFFICE
 HOMICIDE DIVISION
 RESTAURANT
 ELIAS' LIVING ROOM
 BIKINI SHOP
 APARTMENT CORRIDOR
 JERRY GRIMES' APART./BEDROOM
 HALLWAY
 NEWSPAPER MORGUE
 ROCKFORD'S TRAILER
 MUNICIPAL BLDG./FILE ROOM
 PIPER APACHE
 POLICE SQUAD ROOM
 BAR
 MEN'S ROOM
 SARA'S LIVING ROOM
 WEDDING CHAPEL
 KARATE STUDIO
 DRUGSTORE/STOCK ROOM
 CORONER'S OFFICE
 MOUNTAIN CABIN

THE ROCKFORD FILES

FADE IN

1 EXT. CITY STREET - RUNBY - DAY

1

This is a street in the heart of the small beach city of Venice. It has the garish patchwork look of a street which has gone to ruin. Too many neon signs. A yellow city transit bus rumbles past. A half a block back it is followed by a dark blue Jensen with a lone man driving.

1-A INT. BUS - DAY

1-A

There are only four or five people on the bus. We center on a man seated just behind the rear exit door. He is old, about sixty, and can only be described as a wino. He is characteristic of this breed in every way -- unshaven, dirty, his overcoat in tatters. His name is Harvey Butler. He is leaning forward, trying to see what is going on, as the bus comes to a stop and takes on a passenger -- an old woman. He looks disappointed and leans across the aisle and taps a black man, who is asleep. The black man looks over at Harvey without changing his slumped down position.

BLACK MAN

Whatta you want now?

HARVEY

(a little drunk)

What time is it?

BLACK MAN

Ten past two and ten minutes from now it'll be twenty past two and ten minutes after that it'll be half past, so now you don't hafta ask me for twenty minutes and by then I'll be off the bus.

Harvey turns back and looks out the window of the bus, which is moving again.

CUT TO

1-B EXT. CITY STREET - RUNBY - DAY

The yellow transit bus clatters along, the blue Jensen still a short distance behind.

2
and
3 OMITTED

2
and
3

4 INT. BLUE JENSEN - DAY

4

The man behind the wheel is heavily muscled and could be considered handsome. He is about thirty with wavy blonde hair and a classic profile. His muscles flex under a polo shirt. His name is Jerry Grimes. There is a voice speaking in French inside the car.

4-A ANGLE - TAPE CASSETTE - DAY

4-A

It is custom mounted in the dash of the car, and is turning slowly. This is a Berlitz-type tape and the voice speaking in French pauses from time to time for the listener to answer the question. Jerry drives, keeping the bus in view, and practices his French.

VOICE

Est ce que Jean est un mauvais garcon?

JERRY

Non, Jean n'est pas un mauvais garcon.

VOICE

Comment est-il Jean?

JERRY

Jean est un bon garcon.

Jerry never takes his eyes off the bus.

CUT TO

4-B INT. BUS - DAY

4-B

The bus is now empty, except for Harvey, and the driver pulls over to the side of the street, parks the bus, and turns around.

DRIVER

(to Harvey)

Hey, you!

HARVEY

Huh?

DRIVER

Gotta get off or pay for the return trip. We're at the beach.

Harvey gets up and staggers up the aisle toward the driver.

CONTINUED

4-B

CONTINUED

4-B

HARVEY

I'm supposed to meet somebody.
Gotta stay here till he gets here.

DRIVER

Don't make me throw you off.

Harvey looks at him for a moment, then gets off the bus.

CUT TO

4-C

EXT. OLD LIQUOR STORE - DAY

4-C

Seedy, in a run-down section of Venice, near the water. Over this shot, we hear:

VOICE

Jean va au restaurant. Il ouvre
la porte et il entre.

Harvey Butler exits the liquor store and turns toward the beach, moving along the sidewalk. On this, we widen to show that this shot is through the windshield of Jerry Grimes' car. He is watching as the tape drones on.

VOICE

Il ferme la porte et il va au
table.

He pulls the tape out of the cassette machine in the dash.

4-D

EXT. STREET - DAY

4-D

Harvey moves along the sidewalk carrying the brown paper bag with the bottle inside. The blue Jensen is tailing him some distance back. It moves like a dark blue shadow, a shark in shallow water.

4-E

ANGLE - THE BEACH - DAY

4-E

Harvey walks across the sand and moves toward his spot under the Santa Monica pier. He sits down and looks at the surf rolling in. We move in on him to a tight closeup. He takes a swig on the bottle and then looks again out to the sea.

4-F

NEW ANGLE - HARVEY - DAY

4-F

A garish necktie slips around his neck and is drawn tight.

4-G TIGHT - HARVEY

4-G

The bottle drops from his hand and he claws for the tie around his neck. We can now see that it is Jerry holding the tie. Jerry talks softly to him, almost like someone who is soothing a pet. In strange contrast to the scene is the almost pathetic tone to it, almost a love tone.

JERRY

(softly)

Easy, Mr. Butler...Just relax...
That's right...Easy now...You're
doing fine....

When he finishes, he releases the tie and Harvey Butler slumps over on the sand, dead.

4-H FULL SHOT - SCENE OF MURDER - DAY

4-H

Jerry is still talking softly to the body as he goes through the pockets of Butler's old coat, turning them inside out. He goes through the rest of the body, turning the pockets inside out and ripping one open. He goes to the foot of the body and unlaces Butler's shoes, takes them off, and then moves slowly away from the body. Hold on the bug-eyed corpse of Harvey Butler as the sound of the surf continues and we

CUT TO

5 thru 17 OMITTED

5 thru 17

18 EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

18

This is the University Division Police Station. University Division is old and the second busiest division in Los Angeles; the only area with a larger crime problem is 77th Division (Watts).

19 INT. WATCH COMMANDER'S OFFICE - DAY

19

This is a small corner office. It is neat and orderly and there is a sign on a battered wooden desk. It reads: Captain Harry Dell -- Homicide. We are on the sign as we hear an argument in progress.

DETECTIVE BECKER'S VOICE

Some of these cases are still possibles. I don't get enough time to even talk to all the people listed on the A.R. reports.

CONTINUED

19

CONTINUED

19

CAPTAIN DELL

Look, I don't like it any more than you do, but we can't screw around on dead-enders.

As this is going on, we pull back and show Captain Harry Dell. He is a big man in his mid-thirties, who is physically impressive. Despite a rather rough-hewn quality, he is dressed in an immaculately pressed dark suit. The man opposite him is Detective Dennis Becker. He's in his shirt-sleeves and there is a service revolver riding high on his hip. Becker is balding, in his late forties, and a little over-weight. He looks more like an accountant than a cop. Right now he's angry.

CAPTAIN DELL

(softer)

Look, Dennis, you got something warm, I'll let you keep it, but you can't poachy around on cases where we know going in we got nothing...

(a beat)

You gotta pull with me. I got an efficiency graph that looks like the ass-end of a VW, and we got a city full of crazies out there who act like every night is Halloween.

DETECTIVE BECKER

Okay, okay.

Dell is looking at a sheaf of papers that are in a manila file on his desk.

CAPTAIN DELL

How 'bout this prosti, Janet Nicolas....

(a beat)

You got anything good on that one?

DETECTIVE BECKER

We thought the pimp looked good for it but he's got an alibi that won't quit.

(a beat)

Probably a trick.

CAPTAIN DELL

Okay, dump it.

(a beat)

How 'bout this wino they found under the pier -- Butler? What's with him?

CONTINUED

19

CONTINUED - 2

19

DETECTIVE BECKER

I don't know...It looks like a mugging, except for one thing...
(a beat)

Left a pretty good bauble on his finger -- a wedding ring with a half-karat stone. We had it appraised at two hundred bucks.

CAPTAIN DELL

Some diamond...Probably wouldn't scratch glass.

DETECTIVE BECKER

Still, I got a hunch there's more behind it than just a mugging.

(a beat)

I'd like to hold onto it for a couple more days.

CAPTAIN DELL

You got anything solid?

DETECTIVE BECKER

Just a feeling.

CAPTAIN DELL

You know what's wrong with this system...We got a job to do here that can't be done -- and we don't want to admit it to ourselves... So we tell each other we got hunches which is great in detective novels, but which you and I both know ain't worth a trip to the bathroom.

DETECTIVE BECKER

I still think ---

CAPTAIN DELL

(overlapping)

I feel the same way, but we're crapping it off 'cause we ain't got time for it.

(a beat)

Dump it.

DETECTIVE BECKER

I still think ----

CAPTAIN DELL

Dump it!

SMASH CUT TO

20 TIGHT SHOT - OPEN FILE DRAWER - DAY 20

as we watch, a manila folder is shoved into the drawer. In close to:

21 TIGHT SHOT - THE FOLDER 21

Typed on the tab, it says: Homicide -- Harvey Butler.

The drawer is slammed shut, and we pan down to the card taped to the front of the drawer. It reads: Unsolved - Inactive and a date. Hold on this for a long beat and begin the Main Titles for

"THE ROCKFORD FILES"

Credits continue over the following sequence.

CUT TO

22 INT. SARA'S BIKINI SHOP - TIGHT SHOT - TELEPHONE BOOK - 22
YELLOW PAGES - DAY

Angle favors a small blocked ad. It shows a picture of a man's face, which appears to be handsome and friendly, but the ink is on too thick and it's hard to be sure. The copy under the small ad reads: The Rockford Agency -- Our Trained Investigators Have Specialized in Closed Cases Since 1954. Underneath, it says: Criminal, Only. 24-hour Service. Licensed and Bonded. Below that, there is an address: 2354 Madison Blvd., Los Angeles. Pull back slightly to show that the Rockford ad is by far the smallest ad on the page; it is surrounded by half-page ads from large detective agencies.

23 NEW ANGLE - PAD OF PAPER - DAY 23

As a woman's hand scribbles the address on the pad. We pan up and find:

24 SARA BUTLER 24

She is about twenty-five and blonde. Her hair hangs simply down to her shoulders. She is pretty but not striking, the kind of girl who's beauty requires a second look to fully appreciate. She closes the phone book and as it thumps shut, we

CUT TO

25

EXT. OCEAN BOULEVARD - RUNBY - DAY

25

as a six-year old convertible with the top down cruises down the street. Behind the wheel is Sara Butler. She is looking for the address.

26

HER POINT OF VIEW

26

The shot scans a typical stretch of beach around Los Angeles; the buildings are two and three stories. There are a few vacant lots. A small house trailer is parked on one of the lots near the ocean.

27

RESUME - SARA BUTLER

27

She re-checks the address on the pad in front of her as she passes the house trailer and continues along.

27-A

EXT. BEACH - DAY

27-A

Two figures are walking along the beach. One of them is very big and in his mid to late thirties. His name is Tom Rockford. He has the looks that go with a professional athlete, and moves with an athlete's grace. Moving along beside him, talking with animated movements, is his father, Joseph Rockford. ("Rocky") He is sixty-eight, grey hair, and in very good shape. They move along the beach, both carrying fishing rods.

JOSEPH

Whatta ya mean ya can't come? You told me you could come. I set it up with Mort...He got the cabin all stocked with Scotch. Jesus, son, we could really have us a hoot.

(a beat)

Whatta ya got that's so important ya can't go fishing with your old man? I ain't been a good father or something?

ROCKFORD

Come on, Rocky, don't get personal.

JOSEPH

Personal, hell. I went to a lot of trouble to set this up.

CONTINUED

27-A CONTINUED

27-A

ROCKFORD

I'd like to go, dad, but you
shoulda called me. This just
isn't the time.

JOSEPH

Ain't gonna cost you nothing.

ROCKFORD

That's not the point.

JOSEPH

Like hell it ain't.

ROCKFORD

I can't go. It's business.

JOSEPH

You're broke, right? You shoulda
took over my rig, Tommy. You
woulda made a hell of a good
trucker. But no. You gotta be
Sam Spade or something.

Rockford has a beach towel in his hand. He slings it at
his father, who ducks.

ROCKFORD

You're a vicious old coot.

CUT TO

28 OMITTED

28

29 EXT. VACANT LOT - WITH TRAILER

29

as Sara Butler, now coming from the other direction, slows
and then, after a beat, hesitantly pulls her car into the
vacant lot and parks beside the trailer. She re-checks the
address on the pad.

30 HER POINT OF VIEW - THE TRAILER

30

There is a number stuck on the side of the trailer which
corresponds to the address on the pad.

31 RESUME - SARA BUTLER

31

After a moment, she gets out of the car and approaches the
trailer, tries the door, it's locked.

31-A EXT. BEACH - NEAR TRAILER - ROCKFORD AND JOSEPH

31-A

JOSEPH

Come on, Tom. Two days. Get ya
outta the smog. Clean air in your
lungs. Trout over an open fire...

(a beat)

Ain't nobody gonna want you to stick
your nose in their business for 'em
while we're gone.

ROCKFORD

Yeah?

They look up and see Sara by the trailer.

JOSEPH

Ten bucks says it's a bill collector.

ROCKFORD

Make it twenty plus welching
privileges.

JOSEPH

You're on.

They move toward Sara.

ROCKFORD

Yes?

SARA

(hesitantly)
Are you Thomas Rockford?

ROCKFORD

Yes.

SARA

My name is Sara Butler. I want
to talk to you.

ROCKFORD

Sure. Come in.

He shakes her hand and unlocks the door.

JOSEPH

I'll bet you're the Miss Butler
from the bank, right?

SARA

I beg your pardon.

Rockford opens the door and they enter.

31-B INT. PANELED OFFICE - DAY

31-B

This is a small office which has been magnificently furnished in antiques: an ivory-white carpet, leather sofas with an antique coffee table, and there are several abstract paintings. There are no windows in the office. At the end of the room is an antique desk accompanied by a red leather swivel chair. Although quite small, it is a very plush setting. There is a bank of phones on a built-in console beside the desk, also a short-wave radio setup. All have been custom built into the console. As we pan the office, we come to rest on Joseph Rockford.

ROCKFORD

This is my father, Joseph Rockford.

SARA

How do you do.

Joseph shakes hands with her. She looks around the trailer and the plushness of it seems to relax her.

SARA

This is....

ROCKFORD

Different?

SARA

Yes.

ROCKFORD

It's also cheap, tax deductible, earthquake proof, and when I get a case out of town, I take it with me.

JOSEPH

(also to Sara)

It's in hock up to its running lights.

SARA

(a beat)

I need the services of a private detective.

Joseph Rockford gives an audible sigh. He crosses to the door.

JOSEPH

I'll be seeing you, son.

(a beat)

I'll be at Mort's cabin. You got the number.

CONTINUED

31-B CONTINUED

31-B

Rockford snaps his fingers and Joseph Rockford stops, then resignedly takes out his wallet and fishes out a bill and hands it to Rockford.

JOSEPH

Don't forget the welching privileges.

ROCKFORD

I won't.

Joseph Rockford exits the trailer and Sara turns to Tom.

SARA

Welching privileges?

ROCKFORD

He lost a bet but I gave him the right to take me out to dinner and renegotiate the loss.

(a beat)

He'll get me drunk and settle for five bucks.

SARA

Oh....

Rockford crosses to the desk and sits down, motioning Sara to a chair. She looks at him for a long moment. She looks shy, almost frightened.

SARA

I want to retain you, Mr. Rockford.
I need help.

ROCKFORD

That's fine.

(a beat)

I hope you can afford me.

Sara looks at Rockford as if she can't quite understand the question. Finally she looks at him with a little bit of anger.

SARA

I'm sorry...What?

CONTINUED

31-B CONTINUED - 2

31-B

ROCKFORD

I like to get the business out of
the way up front.

(a beat)

I don't want to shock you, Miss
Butler, but I'm not in this
business for adventure.

(a beat)

I'm in it to make a living.

SARA

But you haven't even heard what I
want?

Rockford looks at her for a long moment, then nods his head.

ROCKFORD

You're right, but if we could just
talk about my fee first we will
probably save a lot of time.

SARA

(upset)

I don't think until you hear what
I want you to do you could
possibly....

ROCKFORD

(overlapping)

Excuse me, Miss Butler, but I cost
two hundred dollars a day, plus
expenses.

Sara looks shocked.

SARA

Two hundred dollars!?

ROCKFORD

Plus expenses.

(a beat)

And I only handle criminal cases
that are closed.

(off her look)

It's not like it is on T.V.

(a beat)

I get myself messed up in an L.A.P.D.
active file and I get my can shot
off, my license pulled, and probably
get booked for obstructing justice.

CONTINUED

31-B CONTINUED - 3

31-B

SARA

I thought private investigators got involved in police cases all the time.

ROCKFORD

Y'know what most of my colleagues do for a living, Miss Butler?

She shakes her head.

ROCKFORD

They hang out in cheap hotel room closets with telephoto lenses...

(a beat)

You can hire a guy like that for fifty a day and he'll probably throw in an extra set of prints.

Sara looks at Rockford for a moment and we can almost see her drop the shy little girl act.

SARA

(stiff)

Where did you get this wonderful finishing school approach, Mr. Rockford?

ROCKFORD

People come to me all the time... Sit right there where you're sitting and cry their eyes out... Old women who want their sons out of jail...Girlfriends...Fathers... All of them with problems...

(a beat)

I used to be a softie and listen and then we'd get around to the money and they couldn't pay the freight, so they left and I'd be all depressed and that was that. It was turning me off on my business, so now I do it this way.

Sara is now a little tight-lipped. She looks at Rockford as if she is about to get up and leave. Instead, she opens her purse and pulls out her checkbook.

CONTINUED

31-B CONTINUED - 4

31-B

SARA

Two hundred dollars. That's the price, is it? Well, that's fine.

(a beat)

Money doesn't happen to be my problem. I have enough money to hire a platoon of little people like you.

As she is saying this, she is scribbling out the check. She misspells his name. Rockford is looking across the desk at her work.

ROCKFORD

It's Rockford with a k.

She doesn't make the correction. She rips the check off and flips it across the desk at him.

SARA

May I assume I have your attention now?

ROCKFORD

What is it I can do for you, Miss Butler?

She looks at him and shakes her head in mild disbelief, as Rockford picks up the check, examines it, and puts it back down on the desk.

SARA

My father was murdered. The police don't think it was very important. Just a skid row killing. They think my father was killed by another wino.

ROCKFORD

Skid Row?

There is a long moment, then Sara speaks the next sentence almost as a challenge.

SARA

My father was a wino.

She looks at Rockford but he says nothing, so she goes on:

CONTINUED

31-B CONTINUED - 5

31-B

SARA

Two years ago my mother died...
After she died, it seemed to be
over for him...

(a beat)

I don't understand why it happened
really, but he seemed to stop
caring. I tried to make him forget,
but he started drinking and ended
up a bum...

(a beat)

Two months ago somebody killed him.
Nobody seems to care who did it
but me.

There is a long moment and Rockford looks at Sara closely.

ROCKFORD

The cops aren't on it?

SARA

Not anymore. Detective Becker
was working on it...He wanted to
keep trying but they closed the
case. He recommended I come to you.

ROCKFORD

Y'know, Miss Butler, if the L.A.P.D.
homicide dicks can't solve it,
there's a pretty good chance I can't
either.

SARA

I just found out something that
I think changes it.

ROCKFORD

Did you tell the police?

SARA

Yes. They still don't think there's
anything they can do.

ROCKFORD

What is it?

SARA

Before I tell you, I want you to
meet my brother.

Rockford looks at Sara for a long moment.

CONTINUED

31-B CONTINUED - 6

31-B

ROCKFORD

Will you wait for me outside...I
have to make a phone call.

SARA

Then you'll take the case?

ROCKFORD

Let's talk to your brother, then
I'll let you know. I'll be right
out.

Sara is on her feet. She moves out of the trailer and closes the door. Rockford picks up the phone and dials a number, then he picks up the check on his desk.

ROCKFORD

(into phone)

I'd like to run a credit check on
a Miss Sara Butler, 2378 Addison
Street, Los Angeles...

(a beat)

Yeah, this is Tom Rockford.

CUT TO

32
and
33

OMITTED

32
and
33

34

INT. DRUG STORE - STOCK ROOM - TIGHT SHOT - NICK BUTLER - DAY 34

He is nineteen years old and is as unattractive as nineteen-year-old boys come. His hair is already receding; he has pimples and wears horn-rimmed glasses; his expression is an almost constant scowl. He is glaring at someone.

NICK

That's dumb, Sara, really dumb. I
don't wanna talk to you, Mister, so
you and my sister can just take a
hike.

Pull back to show that we are in the stock room of a drugstore. Pharmaceuticals are lying around in opened cartons. Nick Butler is dressed in a white coat of a drugstore employee. Sara and Tom Rockford are standing opposite him.

NICK

Who let you back here, anyway? If
Mr. Tigoshi finds you back here,
he'll throw you out.

CONTINUED

34

CONTINUED

34

ROCKFORD

I'll risk it.

NICK

Listen, Mister, I'm not talking to anybody about my father.

(to Sara)

Why don't you leave it alone, Sara? What'd he ever do for us except come around asking for money so he could souse up on cheap wine? Somebody killed him...Okay, that's too bad....

Sara steps forward and slaps Nick across the face. He makes a move toward her but Rockford intervenes.

NICK

You can't be Mother, Sara. It won't work. I should think you would know that now.

SARA

Can't you have some sympathy?

NICK

He treated you like a Queen... bought you presents...told you how pretty you were...I got to carry his golf bag on Saturday and empty out the garbage.

(a beat)

You go ahead and have sympathy, Sara, but sympathy is an emotion that's counterproductive.

SARA

Would you rather I took Mr. Rockford up to talk to your Mrs. Elias?

This stops Nick for a minute.

NICK

(weighing it)

You wouldn't.

SARA

Come on, Mr. Rockford. I want you to meet someone.

She starts to take Rockford out of the stock room when Nick stops them by moving to block their exit.

CONTINUED

34

CONTINUED - 2

34

NICK

Sara...you can't do this.

SARA

Watch me.

Nick finally nods his head.

NICK

(surly)

You're a cop, huh?

ROCKFORD

What I am, Sonny, is about fifty pounds heavier than you and one hell of a lot meaner. So you better soften up your approach or get ready to kiss the deck. I don't think I like you.

Nick looks at Rockford for a long moment. He's intimidated.

NICK

Okay, okay.

(to Sara)

But you better not bother Mrs. Elias.

(a beat)

You promise?

SARA

I promise.

Nick looks around as if someone might be listening, then turns to Rockford.

NICK

It's not all that important. Sara thinks it's a big deal but it's not important.

ROCKFORD

Tell me about it anyway.

NICK

This lady, who I make deliveries to, got kind of interested in me. She learned about my mother dying and my father getting killed and she found out that I wanted to be a doctor...That's all.

CONTINUED

34

CONTINUED - 3

34

SARA

That's not all, Nick. Tell him everything.

NICK

She offered to send me to Medical School.

Rockford looks over at Sara who is mildly triumphant, having forced this from her obnoxious brother.

ROCKFORD

That's all?

NICK

I told you it wasn't much.

SARA

Tell the rest of it.

NICK

It's not important. You're making a big deal outta nothing.

SARA

(firm)

Tell him, Nick.

NICK

She orders her pharmaceuticals from this drug store and she has them delivered to her house in Bel Air.

SARA

(to Rockford)

You see?

ROCKFORD

No.

SARA

Why would she deal with this drug store? It's halfway across town. There are fifteen or twenty that are closer.

NICK

She just does. Look, Sara, don't ruin this for me. How many times does a guy get a chance to be put through medical school? Don't mess it up. Please....

CONTINUED

34

CONTINUED - 4

34

ROCKFORD

The medical profession could use
more sweet guys like you.

Hold on this for a beat, then

CUT TO

35

EXT. COFFEE PATIO - SUNSET BOULEVARD - DAY

35

Sara is sitting under a colorful awning drinking coffee. Rockford is at a phone by the hostess stand. He hangs up and moves over to Sara and sits down. He looks at her for a long moment, then picks up his coffee and sips it. He says nothing.

SARA

What's wrong?

ROCKFORD

I was just beginning to like you....

SARA

(bright)

I like you, too.

ROCKFORD

While we were out slapping your brother around, I had some people run a credit check on you....You know what I found out?

SARA

(fearing the worst)

What?

He looks up at her, then drops her check down on the table in front of her.

ROCKFORD

You laid some bad paper on me.
People who like one another almost never do that sort of thing....

Sara reaches for her purse, opens it, and takes out her checkbook, looks at it, and then shakes her head in self-disgust.

SARA

Oh...How stupid of me! That's my grocery account. I wrote it on the wrong bank. I'm sorry....

CONTINUED

35

CONTINUED

35

ROCKFORD

Knock it off, Sara. According to these guys, you're the only person in town with worse credit than me.

SARA

What are you going to do?

ROCKFORD

I don't know.

Sara hesitates, then changes her approach.

SARA

I had to do it.

(a beat)

This is important to me. He was my father. Somebody killed him. They choked him with a necktie, they took his shoes and left him on the beach. Dammit, they're not gonna get away with it. Not if I have anything to say about it.

She looks at Tom Rockford for a long moment. He is sipping his coffee. She relaxes a little bit, some of the tension going out of her.

SARA

I'm sorry about the check but nobody would listen to me. I needed somebody to listen.

(a beat)

Will you take the case, Mr. Rockford? Please.

(a beat)

Don't you see how strange it is? Why would she buy from that pharmacy...? It doesn't make sense.

ROCKFORD

Okay, but what does it have to do with your father's death?

SARA

I don't know, but it's unusual, isn't it? Admit it.

ROCKFORD

Okay, it's unusual, but not that unusual.

CONTINUED

35 CONTINUED - 2

35

SARA

Now that you've met Nick, how many women do you think would be interested in sending him to Medical School?

This also stops Rockford. He thinks about it for a long moment.

ROCKFORD

Well, we haven't seen Mrs. Elias. She may look like she got dredged up out of the L.A. river.

SARA

Nick says Mrs. Elias is very attractive.

ROCKFORD

Okay, Miss Butler. Let's say that doesn't track either, but it still isn't evidence that anybody could move on.

SARA

But it's strange, isn't it? Admit it.

ROCKFORD

Okay, it's strange -- but it's not that strange.

SARA

Even Nick thought it was odd when it first happened...But now he just wants to protect that scholarship.

There is a long beat, then:

SARA

Will you take the case?

Rockford looks at her for a long moment.

ROCKFORD

I don't know.

SARA

What is it with you? Are you independently wealthy, or on some kind of big case or something?

CONTINUED

35

CONTINUED - 3

35

ROCKFORD

What do you do for a living when
you're not writing bad checks?

SARA

I have a small bikini shop. I make
everything myself.

ROCKFORD

How much do you make?

SARA

About two hundred a week after ex-
penses.

ROCKFORD

So you can't really afford me.

SARA

No.

ROCKFORD

If I don't think there's much
chance of solving this case and I
still go ahead and take everything
you make in two weeks for one day
of my time, what does that make me?

SARA

I don't think that has anything to
do with it.

ROCKFORD

Well, I think it makes me an un-
principled jerk and since I haven't
got any real close friends, I have
to get along with myself, so I
don't take cases where I think I'm
wasting my time or your money...
That is, if you had any.

Sara looks at Rockford for a long moment.

SARA

What are you doing for dinner tonight?

ROCKFORD

Huh?

CONTINUED

35

CONTINUED - 4

35

SARA

I know a place out in the valley...
Candlelight dining, a flamenco
guitarist...Very informal. If
you're free, I could make some
reservations for us...It's lovely
there...You can ---

ROCKFORD

Sara.

SARA

What?

ROCKFORD

Knock it off, will you?

She looks at him for a long moment, then:

ROCKFORD

(continuing)

I'll spend three hours on it, just
for fun. No charge. Then if it
looks like it's gonna develop and
if you can come up with two
hundred bucks a day, I'll take it
on.

SARA

Good.

Rockford picks up the check from the table and hands it to her.

ROCKFORD

Don't drop it. It'll bounce up and
hit you under the chin.

SARA

Funny. Very funny.

She's smiling when she says it.

CUT TO

36

EXT. CITY NEWSPAPER BUILDING - DAY - N.P.S.

36

37

INT. ANGEL MARTIN'S OFFICE - DAY

37

"Angel" is a monicker hung on Alvin Martin. When we see Alvin Martin, we can guess why. He looks about as sinsiter as a man can look. He is seated behing a large battered desk looking at Tom Rockford, who is seated across from him. There is a sign on the desk which has Alvin Martin printed in white letters.

CONTINUED

37

CONTINUED

37

ANGEL

I don't know, Tom...How do ya figure it? If I didn't have to keep this crummy job, I'd quit.

ROCKFORD

So quit.

ANGEL

You don't know what it's like being on parole.

(a beat)

You got sprung by the Govenor. But me? I gotta check in once a week with some fish called Norman Carter and I got to tell him how it's going.

(a beat)

If my brother-in-law didn't own this paper, I probably wouldn't ever got out of prison.

(a beat)

No, I'm stuck, baby. Stuck.

ROCKFORD

Sorry to hear it, Angel.

ANGEL

It's okay. I guess I got it coming.

(a beat)

I did that bank.

ROCKFORD

Yeah. When we were in, you musta told me a hundred times you were innocent.

ANGEL

Yeah. Well, I wasn't.

(a beat)

How 'bout you?

ROCKFORD

Huh?

ANGEL

You really do it?

ROCKFORD

No, I was bad-rapped.

CONTINUED

37

CONTINUED - 2

37

ANGEL

Sure, sure...

(a beat)

Look, I told you. Come on, give
it to me straight. You were in
that robbery, right?

ROCKFORD

Wrong.

Angel looks at Rockford for a long moment.

ANGEL

I don't believe you.

ROCKFORD

Nobody ever did.

(a grin)

Look, did you get what I wanted?

ANGEL

Yeah. I went back through the old
society columns and I pulled up
something on this Elias twitch...

(a beat)

Take a look.

He hands Rockford a news clipping and Rockford scans it for a
long moment.

ANGEL

Some coincidence, huh?

ROCKFORD

Yeah...Sure is....

There is a long beat.

ROCKFORD

When did her husband die? What was
the date?

ANGEL

It was in June of last year. It's
there on the second page.Rockford flips the clipping to the second page and then looks
back at Angel.

ROCKFORD

Thanks, Angel.

(a beat)

I'll see you later. We'll have
dinner.

CONTINUED

37

CONTINUED - 3

37

ANGEL

I can't...It's a condition of
parole, I can't hang out with any-
body I did time with.

Rockford nods.

ROCKFORD

Well, when you get off then.

He heads to the door. At the door, Angel puts his hand on Rockford's arm.

ANGEL

Hey, Tommy...

(a beat)

Come on, just between us. You
were dirty, right? You did it?

ROCKFORD

No.

ANGEL

I won't tell. What the hell, I
just wanna know.

ROCKFORD

No. I never pulled the job.

ANGEL

(a long beat)

Okay, you wanna be that way, I never
did the bank either.

ROCKFORD

I never thought you did.

ANGEL

Well, I didn't.

ROCKFORD

I'll see ya, Angel.

He grins at the ugly little man who finally returns the grin
and, if anything, it makes him even uglier.

38

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY - N.P.S.

38

The same establishing shot as before.

39 INT. HOMICIDE DIVISION - ANGLE ON DET. BECKER AND ROCKFORD 39

They are moving through the squad room.

BECKER

Yeah, it's closed. I thought it was a mistake but we're getting a homicide a night down here and I just have to center my time on the ones that look solvable.

ROCKFORD

Let me have a look at the file, will ya?

BECKER

I can't, Tom. You know that.

(a beat)

I can't even tell you about it. Let's face it, every time you get lucky and solve a dead case, you make us look stupid. My captain hates you.

ROCKFORD

But if you were going to tell me, what would you say?

BECKER

I'd probably tell you that there was a two hundred dollar diamond on his finger and that for my money that, doesn't shake out as a robbery.

ROCKFORD

I see...

(a beat)

Okay, Dennis, I'm gonna poke around, I think.

BECKER

You get anything solid, I want to hear about it.

ROCKFORD

Right.

(a beat)

Thanks.

CUT TO

40 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

40

Rockford and Sara are standing in the entryway. She is dressed in a simple black dress, with a string of pearls. Sara looks at Rockford, who is in a sport coat with no tie. After a moment, the Maitre'd comes up to him and shows him a selection of three of four ties. Rockford finally selects one and starts putting it on.

ROCKFORD

(putting on tie)

I thought this place was informal.

Sara smiles.

ROCKFORD

What's so funny?

SARA

Nothing.

The Maitre'd motions the way and Rockford and Sara follow. They are no sooner seated when Sara starts up.

SARA

(a beat)

Well?

ROCKFORD

Well, what?

SARA

Are you going to take the case or not?

ROCKFORD

How are you going to pay for it?

SARA

I thought maybe we could work out a deal.

ROCKFORD

I'm sorry, but I don't have specials anymore.

(a beat)

It's gotta be two hundred a day, plus expenses.

SARA

Why is it so expensive?

CONTINUED

40

CONTINUED

40

ROCKFORD

It's not expensive. It's just a little less than a good plumber will make if he doesn't work on weekends.

(a beat)

Besides, it's dangerous. There's a strange thing about unsolved cases...There is usually somebody in the shadows who doesn't want them re-opened. You'd be surprised how nasty they can get.

SARA

What if I could pay you on the installment plan?

ROCKFORD

I did that once and got stiffed. Ended up in Small Claims Court to get the balance.

SARA

I'm trying to hire you but I guess you just don't want to work for me.

ROCKFORD

You're not trying to hire me, you're trying to chisel me down.

(a beat)

How big an installment?

SARA

(quick)

Twenty-five dollars a week.

ROCKFORD

Is that all?

SARA

I'll pay you, Mr. Rockford. I promise.

ROCKFORD

That means if I work for one day, you owe me twenty-five dollars a week for eight weeks.

(a beat)

You sure that's what you want to do?

She nods.

CONTINUED

40

CONTINUED - 2

40

ROCKFORD

(a long beat)
Okay, I'll take it.

She smiles and reaches across the table and shakes his hand.

SARA

Tell me what made you decide?

ROCKFORD

I looked into Mrs. Elias's background and I came up with a strange coincidence...

(a beat)

Three years ago, she was a dancer here in L.A., did a lot of TV variety shows....

SARA

What's the coincidence?

ROCKFORD

The coincidence is that she married a guy named William Elias...Elias was sixty-eight years old and looked like he'd been emptied out of a vacuum cleaner. But he had ten million dollars. Mildred Elias, then known as Mildred Mills, married him in Las Vegas and, on their wedding night, he croaked... She is now Mrs. Mildred Elias and is filthy with money.

SARA

But how does that tie in with my father's death?

ROCKFORD

It doesn't. It didn't even happen within ten months of when your father was killed, but it's still a funny coincidence...And Nick's Medical School offer is kind of strange and I don't believe in coincidences happening on top of one another, so I'll look into it for a day or so.

Sara looks at him for a long moment.

CONTINUED

40 CONTINUED - 3

40

SARA
Thank you, Mr. Rockford.

ROCKFORD
Tom.

SARA
Tom.

There is a long beat, then Sara looks at him with a critical eye.

ROCKFORD
What is it?

SARA
I like you in a tie.

ROCKFORD
That makes you and my mother, rest her soul.

SARA
And nobody else?

ROCKFORD
I don't think anybody else really gives a damn.

Sara smiles and we

CUT TO

41 EXT. ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY - LAS VEGAS

41

This is a shot of the strip. Magnificent hotels lined up on both sides of the highway in the middle of the desert.

42 EXT. DOWNTOWN LAS VEGAS - DAY

42

Seedy, downbeat, a sharp contrast to the glitter of the strip.

43 EXT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - DAY

43

An old brick building, four stories high. Rockford's car is parked in front.

CUT TO

44 INT. CORONER'S OFFICE - TIGHT SHOT - DR. RUBEN SEELMAN - 44
DAY

He is balding, pudgy, and looks like he's constantly in a sweat. Pull back to show Rockford.

DR. SEELMAN

Yes, I was the coroner who did the autopsy on Mr. Elias.

(a beat)

We had four separate autopsies...
They were performed by private physicians...

(a beat)

I don't mind telling you his widow, Mrs. Elias, was really treated rather badly by the authorities... They felt she killed him because of the amount of money involved and because she was thirty years younger...and because of the coincidence of the fact that he died on their wedding night.

ROCKFORD

That all sounds pretty reasonable.

DR. SEELMAN

Well, maybe, but you should have seen his respiratory system...

(a beat)

His arteries were hard enough to pound through two inches of concrete...

ROCKFORD

There's no way it could have been induced by electric shock or drugs or something?

DR. SEELMAN

No. As I said, Mr. Rockford, Mr. Elias had a cousin who was trying to cut himself into the will...He had four different doctors examine the body after I did...They all came up with the same answer: Mr. Elias died of a very natural and inevitable heart attack. He'd been at a wedding party and he ate too much and drank too much...and he couldn't take it.

CONTINUED

44

CONTINUED

44

ROCKFORD

Okay, thank you.

DR. SEELMAN

Are you trying to re-open the case,
Mr. Rockford?

(a beat)

Because if you are and you're interested in a medical opinion, I think you're wasting your time.

Hold on Rockford for a moment, then:

ROCKFORD

Thank you for seeing me, Doctor.

Rockford turns and exits the office. As soon as he does, Dr. Seelman opens a phone directory on his desk, then dials a 213 area code and a number. There is a long beat, and then:

DR. SEELMAN

(into phone)

Mrs. Elias?

(a beat)

I don't know whether you remember me but this is Dr. Seelman....

45

OMITTED

45

46

INT. LIVING ROOM - CLOSE SHOT - MILDRED ELIAS - DAY

46

She is a woman of extremely generous proportions. She is not pretty, but there is a sultriness and sexiness that carries the feeling of great beauty where it really doesn't exist. She has the lithe look of a dancer; she is dressed conservatively as she stands in a magnificent living room, the telephone to her ear. Intercut:

MILDRED

Yes, I remember, Doctor. You did the autopsy on William.

DR. SEELMAN

I didn't want to bother you, but there is a man up here who seems very interested in the coroner's report that I filed.

MILDRED

How strange....

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED .

46

DR. SEELMAN

I think he's going to try and re-open the case in some way...

(an awkward pause)

I felt so badly about the way you were treated when he died...There was no question he died a natural death.

(a beat)

I just thought I would tell you so if you had some way of stopping this man, you could do it.

MILDRED

Thank you, Doctor.

(a beat)

You wouldn't happen to have his name?

DR. SEELMAN

(embarrassed)

Of course...I have his card.

(reads card)

Tom Rockford. It says he's a private investigator who specializes in closed cases...There's no address on the card.

MILDRED

Thank you, Doctor.

DR. SEELMAN

(he hesitates for a moment)

Ah...Mrs. Elias, if you ever get up to Las Vegas, I hope we might see each other...I....

MILDRED

Of course, Doctor Seelman. I still have your number...Let's make a date and plan on it...

(a beat)

Could I call you back later?

DR. SEELMAN

Of course. Sure, I'm here all the time. You'd be surprised how many people die in this town...I hardly ever leave the office...If you just call me here at the office, I'll probably be here.

MILDRED

Good.

CONTINUED

46 CONTINUED - 2

46

MILDRED (Cont'd)

(a beat)

And thank you, Doctor.

She hangs up and Dr. Seelman hangs up. He is obviously carrying one hell of a torch for Mildred Elias. He grins for a moment, and we

CUT TO

46-A INT. KARATE STUDIO - TIGHT ON PIECE OF WOOD

46-A

A foot comes up and breaks the board. There is the sound of heavy breathing. Pull back to show Jerry Grimes working out. He is very good and has a black belt tied around his karate outfit.

MAN'S VOICE

Jerry? Telephone.

He stops his workout, moves over to the phone, and takes it. Intercut with Mildred in her living room.

MILDRED

(into phone)

Jerry? It's Milly.

46-B ANGLE - JERRY GRIMES

46-B

JERRY

I was about to call. Where's this week's check?

Intercut:

MILDRED

Forget the damned check. It'll be there. I've got to see you.

(a beat)

I think we're in trouble.

Hold on Jerry for a beat, and

CUT TO

47

and

48

OMITTED

47

and

48

49

INT. BIKINI SHOP - TIGHT SHOT - SARA

49

This is a small one-room shop. There are racks with bikinis

CONTINUED

49 CONTINUED

49

and beach shifts. Sara is behind a counter sewing on something. We can see a back room behind her with one sewing machine and a cutting table.

SARA

What is it? What'd you find out?

50 ANGLE - ON ROCKFORD

50

He is standing by the door. Rockford doesn't say anything for a beat.

SARA

Don't tell me you're off the case again?

Rockford nods.

SARA

But why?

ROCKFORD

I just got back from Vegas... According to the coroner who did the autopsy, Mr. Elias died of a heart attack. He said it was legit...no possibility it was induced.

SARA

If there was some kind of connection between Mr. Elias and my father, maybe he's lying....

ROCKFORD

Why?

SARA

Maybe she paid him....

ROCKFORD

You want my opinion: It's a dead-end.

Rockford takes a slip of paper out of his pocket and slides it over to Sara.

ROCKFORD

I didn't charge you for the time... ten hours driving to Vegas and back...

CONTINUED

50

CONTINUED

50

ROCKFORD (Cont'd)

I just put in seven cents a mile and gas and the time I spent working on it up there and the two phone calls here...

(a beat)

It comes to seventy-five dollars. I'll give you a receipt. It's tax deductible.

Sara looks at the slip of paper and makes no move to pick it up.

SARA

Just what kind of jerk are you?

ROCKFORD

My own kind.

(a beat)

Look, Sara, I'm sorry...I know you want to find out who killed your father but if you want the advice of a friend, forget it.

(a beat)

Even if you find out who did it, your father will still be dead and you won't feel any better about it.

(a beat)

Believe me....

SARA

(exploding)

You don't know anything about it! You stand there with your seven cents a mile and two phone calls and try and tell me about my father. I'm going to find out who killed him.

ROCKFORD

It was nice knowing you, Sara.

(a beat)

I think you should bury your father before he buries you.

He gets up and walks out of the shop, as we move in and hold on Sara for a long beat.

51

EXT. BIKINI SHOP - DAY

51

Rockford gets in his car, which is parked in front of the shop. He drives off. Hold for a beat and then we see that a very elaborate sports car pulls out and follows him. It is the blue Jensen.

- 52 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - DAY 52
He is driving slowly. He glances in the rearview mirror.
- 53 HIS POINT OF VIEW - REARVIEW MIRROR - THE BLUE JENSEN 53
- 54 RESUME - ROCKFORD 54
He doesn't seem to pay it much attention. He is deep in thought.
- 55 EXT. STREET - DAY - RUNBY 55
First, Rockford's car, then half a block back is the Jensen.
- 56 INT. JENSEN CAR - DAY 56
Jerry Grimes is driving. He has a pair of dark glasses on; his wavy blonde hair is neatly in place.
- 57 EXT. STREET - DAY 57
as Rockford's car pulls past and then turns into a gas station and parks in front of the phone booth.
- 58 EXT. GAS STATION - DAY 58
Rockford goes into the phone booth, opens the telephone book, finds a number and dials it.
- ROCKFORD
(into phone)
Miss Butler, it's Tom Rockford....
- 58-A INT. BIKINI SHOP - ANGLE ON SARA - DAY 58-A
There is a customer in front of her and Sara has the change drawer open.
- SARA
Just a minute...I'm with a customer.
- She sets down the receiver. Intercut as Rockford turns to the back of the phone book to the yellow pages. He looks for his own ad.

59 HIS POINT OF VIEW - THE YELLOW PAGES - CLOSE ON HIS AD

59

On the picture of him somebody has put a mustache. He takes a pencil with an eraser out of his pocket and starts to erase the mustache, as we:

60 RESUME - SARA

60

Sara picks up the phone as her customer leaves. Intercut conversation as Rockford continues to erase the mustache on the picture.

SARA

Yes? What is it?

ROCKFORD

I been thinking there's still one other thing I could check out....

SARA

What's wrong, Tom? Did you just figure out you're overdrawn at the bank?

ROCKFORD

You don't have to get smart.

SARA

I don't see why not...After all, you're a pretty hard man with a buck.

ROCKFORD

You want me to stay on this for a while or not?

SARA

Depends.

(a beat)

Whatta you going to do?

ROCKFORD

I might just try to run a bluff with Mrs. Elias.

SARA

Okay. If you want to, it's okay with me.

(a beat)

Tom, don't hurt Nick's chances for Medical School.

61 TIGHT SHOT - THE PICTURE

61

He has erased it too hard and the paper tears.

ROCKFORD

Dammit!

Intercut:

SARA

Then don't go. He's still my brother.

ROCKFORD

No, I tore my picture.

SARA

Huh?

ROCKFORD

Nothing...Forget it. I'll call you back.

He hangs up, as we

CUT TO

62 EXT. ELIAS ESTATE - DAY

62

A magnificent wrought-iron gate protects the carefully manicured grounds and white Spanish architecture of the home. We can see Rockford's car parked in front of the house.

63 EXT. POOL AREA - ANGLE - MILDRED ELIAS

63

She is in a brief bikini, stretched out on a pool chair, taking in the sun. She has a pair of sun guards over her eyes. Rockford is seated on a chair next to her. He is in a coat and tie. He has some brochures in front of him, along with a printed form. He also has on a pair of rimless glasses.

ROCKFORD

If you could just look at some of the admitting forms for just a moment, Mrs. Elias, I think what I'm saying would make a little more sense.

Mrs. Elias takes the sun guards off her nose and sits up for a moment. She is truly breathtaking in a bathing suit, especially this one. She looks at Rockford.

MILDRED

You don't look much like a Dean of Admissions....

CONTINUED

63 CONTINUED

63

ROCKFORD

(slightly interested)

Really? What do I look like?

MILDRED

You look like a truck driver in a
suit.

63-A ANGLE - ROCKFORD

63-A

He hesitates for a moment, then takes off his glasses and looks a little disappointed.

ROCKFORD

Oh...

(a beat)

Well, I'm not.

(a beat)

Actually, being a Dean of Admissions is really quite a challenge. Do you know that at Mollar we have over twelve hundred applicants for every opening?

MILDRED

Twelve hundred? What a job that must be screening them out. I had no idea....

ROCKFORD

Well, of course, many of those are multiple applications.

She looks at him with a questioning look and Rockford picks it up.

ROCKFORD

That means they're applications from people who are also applying to other Medical Schools, so it's not as bad as it sounds. But, nonetheless, we don't want to accept anyone unless we're sure he's going to be able to continue in the school.

63-B INT. MILDRED ELIAS'S LIVING ROOM - PAST JERRY GRIMES
THROUGH WINDOW

63-B

The angle is over Grimes' shoulder as he looks down at the pool area.

63-C HIS POINT OF VIEW - ROCKFORD AND MILDRED

63-C

They are talking. Rockford is showing her one of the forms.

63-D RESUME - JERRY GRIMES

63-D

He looks like he is having trouble containing himself. He would like to go out and kick the crap out of Rockford, but instead he waits, the anger cutting deep lines in his face.

63-E RESUME - ROCKFORD, MILDRED - AT POOL - DAY

63-E

MILDRED

I see...And what is it you want of
me, Dean...?

ROCKFORD

Simpson...Carter Simpson.

Rockford takes off his coat as Mildred picks up one of the brochures and looks at it.

63-F INSERT SHOT - THE BROCHURE

63-F

It is for Mollar Medical School. We move in on the name of the Assistant Dean -- Carter Simpson.

63-G RESUME - MILDRED, ROCKFORD - DAY

63-G

ROCKFORD

It says that you are the one who is going to pay for Nicholas' education at Mollar. Since you are not related to Nicholas Butler, we just wanted to make sure that you are willing to pay for the whole four years...

(a beat)

What we're really trying to determine is how serious your interest in him really is....

Mildred cocks an eyebrow at the remark.

ROCKFORD

That didn't come out the way I wanted.

(a beat)

You know what I mean....

CONTINUED

63-G CONTINUED

63-G

MILDRED

Nick Butler delivers drugs from the Pharmacy. He's a bright young man whose father and mother are both dead...I'm very wealthy and I couldn't possibly spend everything I have, so I've decided to do this boy a favor.

(a beat)

Does that answer your question?

ROCKFORD

Well...almost. There's one other thing...

(a beat)

The school was wondering if you could set up some kind of trust to guarantee his education for four years...

(a beat)

Believe me, it's not that we don't trust your word, it's just that we must have certain guarantees...

(a beat)

After all, it will probably come to fifteen thousand dollars a year.

Mildred reaches out and takes a pencil off the table and writes something on the letterhead, then hands it back to Rockford.

MILDRED

That's my attorney's number...Call him and he'll make the arrangements.

ROCKFORD

Wonderful. Thank you.

Rockford looks at her for a long moment, then clears his throat.

ROCKFORD

Boy, that pool looks nice....

MILDRED

It is.

ROCKFORD

It's sure a hot day....

MILDRED

Good-bye, Dean Simpson. Call my attorney.

CONTINUED

63-G CONTINUED - 2

ROCKFORD

Good-bye.

He turns and gathers up his things and moves away from the pool area. Hold on Mildred Elias as she watches him go. After he has left, we hear a door close up by the house. Mildred looks in that direction.

63-H HER POINT OF VIEW - THE HOUSE

63-H

as Jerry Grimes moves down toward the pool. She starts to get out of the chair as he approaches.

JERRY

What the hell was he doing here?

MILDRED

Aren't we a little beyond jealousies?

Grimes grabs her and pulls her upright.

JERRY

You don't know who he was, do you?

MILDRED

His name is Simpson. He's --

JERRY

His name is Rockford! He's the guy
you asked me to follow!

Mildred is too stunned to reply, and on her look of shock and apprehension we

CUT TO

64 TIGHT SHOT - A PAD OF PAPER - NIGHT

64

A pencil is tallying up a column of figures on a pad of paper.

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

Six...twelve...twenty...twenty-three,
carry the two...

(a beat)

Let's see, I won't charge you for
the dough I spent to get somebody
to steal the pamphlets and the medi-

CONTINUED

64

CONTINUED

64

ROCKFORD'S VOICE (Cont'd)

cal school application forms...
I can probably use those again.
That's eighty-three dollars and
twenty-six cents.

64-A EXT. TACO STAND - NIGHT

64-A

On this, we pull back and find that Rockford and Sara are seated at a table under neon lights in a taco stand. Rockford hands the slip of paper over to Sara, who looks at it carefully.

SARA

What's this? The eight dollars
and sixty-two cents?

ROCKFORD

Tax.

SARA

Tax? There's no sales tax on a
personal service.

ROCKFORD

Not sales tax -- federal tax. It's
part of the fee, but I break it
down separately for my own records.

SARA

Oh....

She looks at the paper for a long moment, then puts it down.

SARA

Who's paying for the tacos?

ROCKFORD

Me.

SARA

(sarcastic)

Whoopee!

She picks up the taco and bites into it.

SARA

Well, I've got to tell you one
thing: you've certainly been a
new experience for me.

CONTINUED

64-A CONTINUED

64-A

ROCKFORD

Look, Sara, if Mrs. Elias had said anything I could get my teeth into, I woulda kept on. I called her attorney and he's setting up the damned trust...

(a beat)

I even tried to get friendly with her but she wasn't buying.

SARA

Maybe your rates were to high?

ROCKFORD

Okay, if you want to be nasty....

SARA

I'm sorry.

There is a long moment, then:

SARA

Look, I have to get home. I'm dead tired.

ROCKFORD

Whatta you going to do about all this?

SARA

I'm not sure yet. I'm not even sure you're really off the case...

(a beat)

This is the third time you've quit and I'm still getting these little slips of paper from you.

ROCKFORD

I'm off it for good.

Sara reaches over and shakes his hand.

SARA

Okay...Well, thanks for trying.

She gets up and heads over to her car. Rockford watches her go.

CUT TO

65

EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT - RUNBY

65

Rockford's car pulls past camera. It is followed a little ways back by the blue Jensen.

66 INT. JENSEN - NIGHT

66

Jerry Grimes is following Rockford.

67 ANGLE THROUGH WINDOW - TOWARD ROCKFORD'S SEDAN - NIGHT

67

Jerry keeps several car-lengths behind.

68 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR

68

He slows down and makes an abrupt lane change, then looks in his rearview mirror, then:

69 HIS POINT OF VIEW - THE BLUE JENSEN - MIRROR SHOT - NIGHT

69

It is visible behind another car, a half-block back.

70 RESUME - ROCKFORD

70

He now looks puzzled, then accelerates.

71 EXT. CITY STREET - RUNBY - NIGHT

71

First, Rockford pulls past camera, then makes a right-hand turn, followed several moments later by the blue Jensen.

71-A INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - NIGHT

71-A

Still driving, he reaches over and opens the glove compartment and takes out a packaged roll of nickels and drops them in his jacket pocket.

71-B EXT. SMALL BAR - NIGHT

71-B

Rockford pulls into the parking lot, gets out, and strolls leisurely into the bar. There is a large sign out front that says "Entertainment, Drinks, Acrobatic Dancing." After a moment, Jerry Grimes pulls the blue Jensen into the parking lot and gets out. He moves quickly to the door.

71-C INT. BAR - NIGHT

71-C

It is crowded and smokey and a red spotlight is playing over a girl who is obviously an acrobatic dancer. She is moving to the rhythm of the music, which is both exotic and contortive at the same time. Quite a combination.

71-D FOLLOWING JERRY - NIGHT

71-D

He looks around and finally spots Rockford at the end of the bar. Rockford is laughing and talking to the bartender. After a moment, he turns and heads toward the back of the night club.

71-E RESUME - JERRY

71-E

He watches as Rockford goes into the men's room.

71-F INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

71-F

Rockford looks around the room which is empty except for one man who is standing in front of the mirror carefully combing his hair. He gets it combed, looks dissatisfied, and repeats, starting to comb it again. Rockford looks at him impatiently.

71-G INT. BAR - JERRY GRIMES

71-G

He moves to a spot in the bar where he has a good look at the door to the men's room, then sits down and waits.

71-H INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

71-H

Rockford can't wait any longer, so he moves over to the man and taps him on the shoulder.

ROCKFORD

(a little slurred)

Excuse me, but I got me a real
problem...I'd like to borrow
twenty bucks...See, I'm with this
girl....

The man quickly starts to finish combing his hair, then moves toward the door over the following:

ROCKFORD

(continuing)

...from the office...I figured I
put enough booze in her and let her
watch the acrobatic dancers, I'd make
a score but I'm running outta dough...
She's had ten scotch and sodas and
she's drinking me under the table...
You gimme your address and I promise
to mail it to you....

As this is going on, the man splits out of the rest room.

CUT TO

71-J INT. BAR - JERRY GRIMES - NIGHT

71-J

He sees the man exit the men's room, looks at his watch.

71-K INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

71-K

Rockford quickly moves to the wash basin and begins to unscrew one of the liquid soap containers. He takes it off and then moves to the middle of the men's room and begins to pour the liquid soap out on the tile floor. (Intercut with Jerry in bar.)

71-L RESUME - JERRY

71-L

He looks at his watch again. The acrobatic dancer is just finishing her number and the audience applauds. Jerry gets up from the table and moves uncertainly toward the men's room, finally deciding to check it out. He opens the men's room door and enters.

71-M INT. MEN'S ROOM - NIGHT

71-M

Jerry steps through the door and sees Rockford leaning up against the far end of the wash room wall in a very relaxed position, his arms crossed. Jerry steps into the room and pretends to go to the wash basin.

ROCKFORD

You gotta be one of the dumbest-looking ape's I ever saw.

Grimes looks at him but says nothing.

ROCKFORD

I take guys like you apart just for fun.

Jerry is not used to being insulted. He reddens but continues to fiddle at the wash basin.

ROCKFORD

'Course, most of the time, big muscle-bound guys are compensating for feelings of inadequacy....

Jerry turns toward Rockford with an ugly snarl on his face.

JERRY

(tight)

Meaning...?

CONTINUED

71-M CONTINUED

71-M

ROCKFORD

(smiling)

Queer.

There is a long moment, then Jerry seems to change. His voice gets husky.

JERRY

(whispering)

That's fine...That's just fine...

Take it easy....

Rockford continues to stand there with his arms crossed, seemingly relaxed. Jerry makes a sudden move forward and tries a kick, but he hits the soaped-up part of the floor. He loses his balance and misses Rockford, kicking the towel dispenser in half, demolishing it. As he struggles to regain it, Rockford steps forward and nails him with a classic right-cross. Jerry goes to his knees like a bag of cement. Rockford opens his fist and we see that in his right hand he is holding the roll of nickels. He drops the roll in his pocket, strips off his belt. Jerry is beginning to come to. He groans once.

71-N NEW ANGLE - ROCKFORD AND JERRY

71-N

Rockford ties up Jerry's feet with the belt, drags him over to the stalls by the toilet, and hoists him up, so he is half hanging by his feet, half on his back, then Rockford kneels down and goes through his wallet, takes out his license and reads it.

71-P CLOSE SHOT - LICENSE - NIGHT

71-P

It says that this is Jerold Grimes, six-three, 230.

71-Q RESUME - ROCKFORD

71-Q

He slaps Jerry twice across the face with the wallet and his eyes come open. He is now fully conscious. He starts to move and realizes that he is immobile.

ROCKFORD

You know what's wrong with karate, Jerry? It's based on the ridiculous assumption that the other guy will fight fair.

JERRY

You're making a big mistake.

CONTINUED

71-Q CONTINUED

71-Q

ROCKFORD

You better tell me what you're up to, Jerry, or I'm gonna leave you here for the weirdos that hang out in this joint.

JERRY

I come to the bathroom and you sucker-punch me. You gotta big problem, Mister....

ROCKFORD

(overlapping)

I saw you behind me yesterday, but I put it out of my mind because I absolutely refused to believe that anybody would try and tail me in a Jensen...

(a beat)

Then tonight I look in my rearview mirror and there you are again... chrome hubcaps, gold hood ornament and all...

(a beat)

So let's get that much straight. I know you been following me... What I don't know is why.

JERRY

Okay, so I been following you... I thought you were a guy who's been messing around with this chick I know. She asked me to scare him off. I can see now you're the wrong guy.

ROCKFORD

You're full a crap.

JERRY

Fine...You think I'm full of crap... Let me up.

ROCKFORD

Whatta you do for a living, Jerry?

JERRY

Nothing.

ROCKFORD

There are all kinds of nothing... What's your flavor?

CONTINUED

71-Q CONTINUED - 2

71-Q

JERRY

I play the ponies.

ROCKFORD

(a beat)

Okay, Jerry, this is your last chance, then I'm gonna have to mark you up...Why are you following me?

JERRY

Help yourself, then you better get outta the country, 'cause I'm gonna find you and when I do, I'm gonna kick your butt up between your eyes.

Just as Rockford is about to reply, the door to the men's room opens and a balding man, about forty, enters. He looks at Rockford and at Jerry, who is hanging by his feet from the toilet stall.

MAN

Oh...I'm sorry. I didn't know the room was being used....

Rockford looks over at him and smiles.

ROCKFORD

It's okay, we're almost through.

MAN

Well, I'll wait outside....

ROCKFORD

It's okay. You can stay.

The man looks too frightened to move, so he stays there during the following:

ROCKFORD

Oh, yeah, one other thing, Jerry...

(a beat)

You might hear back from some people that there's a guy going through your background...Y'know, bank account and business associates...

(a beat)

If you hear that, don't worry too much about it, it'll just be me.

(a beat)

Have fun....

Rockford exits, as we

CUT TO

71-R EXT. SMALL BAR - NIGHT

71-R

As we watch, Jerry Grimes exits the bar. He is mad as he moves to his car. He is carrying Rockford's belt in his right hand, then he slings it away, and gets into his car and pulls out of the parking lot. We pan it past and come to rest on Rockford's car parked up the street in the shadows with the lights out. He starts the engine and pulls out after Jerry Grimes.

CUT TO

72 thru 83 OMITTED

72 thru 83

84 EXT. CITY STREET - RUNBY - DAY

84

As the blue Jensen pulls past camera, it is followed a long way back by Rockford's car...the lights out.

CUT TO

85 EXT. OUTRIGGER BAR - NIGHT

85

Jerry Grimes pulls up in front of the bar and the doorman takes his car. Jerry enters. Across the street we can see Rockford's car pull up. He watches as Grimes enters the bar, then Rockford gets out of his car and crosses the street. He approaches the doorman.

ROCKFORD

Ah...excuse me....

The doorman looks at Rockford.

DOORMAN

Yes?

Rockford shows him his P.I. license.

ROCKFORD

That guy just went in -- the one with the blue Jensen?

DOORMAN

Yes...What about him?

ROCKFORD

Yeah...Well, I represent the Center City Finance Company...Mr. Grimes has skipped on his car payment... I have a valid warrant and all of the proper certification...Now I don't want to get you in the

CONTINUED

85

CONTINUED

85

ROCKFORD (Cont'd)
middle of this, but I'm going to
go get a sheriff so that we can
make an arrest...If you would be
kind enough to call this number
if Mr. Grimes attempts to leave,
I would appreciate it.

The doorman takes the number and looks at Rockford with an expression of shock.

DOORMAN

Mr. Grimes seems like such a nice man....

ROCKFORD

Don't they all?

Rockford peels off a ten and hands it to the doorman.

ROCKFORD

This is for your trouble.

Rockford starts away, then turns back.

ROCKFORD

One other thing...If I were you,
I wouldn't tell Grimes about
this...The cops would arrest you
for aiding and abetting a felon.

From the doorman's expression, we can see that he is sufficiently warned. Rockford heads back to his car, as we

CUT TO

85-A EXT. SMALL LAUREL CANYON HILLSIDE HOUSE - NIGHT

85-A

This is one of those offbeat houses that are only two or three room shacks and cling to the side of the hill with a spectacular view of the city. Rockford goes to the door and rings the bell, then knocks hard with his knuckles. After a moment, the door opens and Sara looks out at Rockford with sleep-ridden eyes, her expression questioning.

85-B INT. SARA'S HOUSE - NIGHT

85-B

ROCKFORD

I'm back on the case.

Sara stares at him for a long beat.

SARA

What took you so long?

ROCKFORD

May I come in?

CONTINUED

85-B CONTINUED

85-B

Sara hesitates for a moment, then steps back and he enters. The interior of the house is wild. The walls are covered with paintings in vivid hues, but alive, and there is almost no furniture.

ROCKFORD

We got somebody interested in us.
 ..That means I turned over at least one of the right rocks.
 (a beat)
 Get dressed in something sexy...
 I'm gonna offer you a chance to get some of your money back.

SARA

I don't know that I....

Rockford hustles her toward the bedroom.

ROCKFORD

I don't have time to argue about it...I got a doorman holding down the store...I gave him this phone number. He might get wise that he's being bluffed and screw up my action. Get moving! Something slinky.

He shoves her toward the bedroom, as we:

CUT TO

86
 thru
 87 OMITTED

86
 thru
 87

88 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - NIGHT

88

Rockford is driving. Sara is in a black silk evening gown and is putting her lipstick on by the mirror over the visor. He is driving fast.

SARA

Slow-down, or I'll end up looking like the Bride of Frankenstein.

ROCKFORD

Just a few more blocks...I'll let you off on the corner. Remember, he's the big muscle-bound ape in the green shirt. He's probably got a nice bruise on the left side of his jaw.

CONTINUED

88

CONTINUED

88

SARA

You hit him?

ROCKFORD

Yeah.

SARA

How brave! I hope that doesn't
cost extra.

ROCKFORD

You keep up this chicken-hearted
routine of yours and it sure as
hell will.

SARA

Okay, where's the poison?

ROCKFORD

It's not poison. What you take me
for? It's just knock-out-drops.
(a beat)

Here.

He hands her a vial and she looks at it, then puts it in her handbag.

SARA

How much of my own money am I gonna
earn back?

ROCKFORD

I usually pay my operatives twenty
bucks an hour for this kind of
thing.

SARA

Twenty bucks an hour to pick up some
guy who's probably an emotional
cripple and will try and rape me!?

ROCKFORD

He won't try and rape you.

SARA

I won't do it for less than fifty.

Rockford looks at her for a long moment.

ROCKFORD

Jesus, who sicked you onto me?

CONTINUED

88

CONTINUED - 2

88

SARA

The cops.

ROCKFORD

(dry)

Well, at least that much figures...

(a beat)

Okay -- fifty.

Sara looks over at him and smiles. Rockford pulls the car over to the curb and stops.

ROCKFORD

And be careful...Just come on
trampy...Don't talk too much.

SARA

I can handle it.

She gets out of the car and starts to walk away. Rockford calls her back.

ROCKFORD

Sara...be careful.

She smiles and turns away.

89

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT - ANGLE - ROCKFORD'S CAR

89

He is seated in the front seat, waiting. He looks at his watch.

89-A

INSERT - WATCH

89-A

It reads: ten o'clock.

90

NEW ANGLE - ROCKFORD - NIGHT

90

It is much later. He looks at his watch.

90-A

INSERT - WATCH

90-A

It now reads eleven thirty.

90-B

BACK TO ROCKFORD

90-B

We can see that he is getting worried.

90-C ROCKFORD'S POINT OF VIEW

90-C

After a long moment, the door of the restaurant opens and Sara and Jerry Grimes exit the ~~restaurant~~. Sara is holding onto Jerry's arm and is laughing. Jerry reaches down and slaps her on the ass, and laughs.

91 ANGLE - ROCKFORD

91

He looks at this with an expression of absolute disgust, then turns the ignition of his car and waits. After a long moment, the doorman returns with the Robin's egg-blue Jensen. Grimes and Sara get in the car and pull off. Rockford follows.

92 EXT. CITY STREET - NIGHT - RUNBY

as the blue Jensen flashes past camera, Rockford's car is a careful distance behind.

93 INT. JENSEN - NIGHT

93

Grimes is driving. He does indeed have a nice raspberry on the side of his chin. Sara is still holding his arm, which makes it a little awkward to shift the car. Sara reaches up and fingers the bruise on the side of Jerry Grimes' face.

SARA

(a little
drunkenly)

What does the other guy look like,
lover?

GRIMES

(lots of balls)

He's trashed up good. I musta
busted half his ribs.

SARA

I like a man who can handle himself.

GRIMES

That's good, baby, 'cause you're
in for a real treat.

He leers over at her.

94 EXT. JERRY GRIMES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

94

The blue Jensen is parked out in front. Across the street is Rockford's car. Rockford looks at his watch, then gets out of the car and heads across the street. This is a very expensive high rise apartment building, complete with a doorman.

CUT TO

95 INT. JERRY GRIMES' APARTMENT - NIGHT

95

Jerry and Sara are sitting on the sofa. Jerry takes a sip from his drink. The apartment is professionally decorated with expensive antiques. A deal pad twenty floors up.

JERRY

Okay, baby, the social hour is over.

SARA

(cooing)

Don't rush me, Jerry, I have to get in the mood....

JERRY

Mood? What mood? We ain't in high school, for God's sake.

Sara hands him his drink.

SARA

Let's just finish these first....

JERRY

What's with you, anyway? You're the squirrelliest chick I been with in....

He looks at her.

JERRY

Wait a minute...?

SARA

(hopefully)

Something wrong?

JERRY

I know where I seen you...You used to go with Freddy Bader....

SARA

(disheartened)

No, I never knew Freddy.

95-A INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

95-A

Rockford is standing outside the door with his ear to the door, listening, but all he can hear is some mumbling coming from inside. He looks at his watch.

96

OMITTED

96

97 INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

97

Jerry starts to paw Sara.

98 JERRY'S POINT OF VIEW - SARA

98

His vision gets blurry. She begins to go in and out of focus.

99 RESUME - JERRY AND SARA

99

Jerry gets to his feet and stumbles toward the door. Half-way there, he stops, turns, and looks back at Sara, then falls like cut timber, face forward on the floor.

100 ANGLE - SARA

100

She looks at Jerry Grimes for a beat, then gets off the sofa and hurries to the door and opens it. Rockford steps into the apartment, closes and locks the door. He looks at Jerry Grimes, who is out on the floor, then he looks at Sara whose shoulder strap on her gown is down.

ROCKFORD

Did you have to let him paw you like that?

SARA

Paw me? What are you talking about?

ROCKFORD

I saw you outside the bar, playing slap and tickle...I was right across the street.

SARA

What is this?

ROCKFORD

Forget it.

(a beat)

Let's go through this place....

He moves through the living room of the small apartment.

SARA

I mean, what was I supposed to do?
I was trying to pick him up....

CONTINUED

100

CONTINUED

100

ROCKFORD

I said forget it. Let's move quick.
I don't want him to wake up and catch
us.

SARA

You aren't afraid of him, are you?

ROCKFORD

You're damn right I am.

Rockford moves across the room and begins to frisk the apartment. He opens a drawer in a console and we see that there are a lot of body building apparatus. Rockford takes out one of the squeeze grip things and tries to squeeze it closed; he doesn't get very far. He looks over at Sara, who's watching, and throws the gripper back into the cabinet and slams the door shut. He moves into the bedroom.

101

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

101

There is a large bowl on top of the dresser, which is full of two dollar win tickets. Rockford takes them out, looks at them as Sara follows him into the room.

SARA

What's that?

ROCKFORD

Losing tickets from the track...
(a beat)
Some big-time gambler we got here
...he saves his old tickets.

Rockford kneels down and starts going through the drawers.

SARA

Whatta we looking for?

ROCKFORD

I don't know...Something that'll
tell us more about this guy...
(a beat)
Letters -- tax records -- anything.

As he is talking, he is going through the bottom drawer of the dresser. Sara goes over to the closet and opens it, begins checking the shelves. Rockford finds a photo album in a drawer, takes it out, and goes to the bed and starts looking through the album, flipping the pages, one by one, looking at them.

101-A HIS POINT OF VIEW - THE ALBUM

101-

Every one seems to be a night club photo, all of Jerry with his arm around beautiful girls in low-cut dresses.

101-B RESUME - SARA AND ROCKFORD

101-

She looks at him.

SARA

Did you find something?

ROCKFORD

Yeah, his trophy case.

102
thru OMITTED
103102
thru
103

104 CLOSE SHOT - PHOTO - NIGHT

104

It is a shot of Jerry Grimes. He has his arm around Mildred Elias. They are at a posh restaurant.

105 RESUME - ROCKFORD

105

He looks at the photograph for a long moment.

ROCKFORD

Well, we made one nice connection...
(holds out book)
Take a look at this.

She looks at the picture.

SARA

Who is it?

ROCKFORD

That's Mrs. Mildred Elias.

Sara looks at Rockford for a long moment. He is now lost in thought.

SARA

But I still don't see how that helps us?

ROCKFORD

Neither do I, but it is interesting...
(a beat)

Sara, do you have a picture of your father?

CONTINUED

105 CONTINUED .

105

SARA

Yeah. In my wallet.

She digs into her purse and takes out a photograph and shows it to Rockford. He grabs her by the arm and leads her out of the apartment.

CUT TO

106 EXT. NEWSPAPER OFFICE - NIGHT

106

It is lit up and the presses are running.

CUT TO

107 INT. NEWSPAPER MORGUE

107

Angel Martin has his back to Rockford and Sara as he is going through a large file.

ANGEL

Elias...William, come to Angel...
Let's see...No, not here.

He slams the drawer and moves over to another cabinet, pulls it open, and begins to dig around inside.

ANGEL

E...l...i...Here it is, yes....

He pulls out a folder and hands it over to Rockford.

ANGEL

Boy, this stuff is dusty...They wanted to put me down here at first to re-file, but I told 'em takes me a half-hour to look up a name in the phone book...I get the letters in the alphabet mixed up, so I have to keep running through it, y'know....

As he is talking, Rockford is going through the folder. He finally pulls out a clipping with a photograph on it, then lays the photograph of Harvey Butler down next to it.

108 CLOSE SHOT - THE TWO PICTURES

108

The two men bear absolutely no resemblance to one another. Elias is round-faced and bald. Butler is hawk-faced with lots of gray hair.

109 RESUME - THREE SHOT

109

Angel is looking over their shoulders.

ANGEL

You think these two guys got mixed up with one another? That maybe the cops buried the wrong guy?

CONTINUED

109 CONTINUED

109

ROCKFORD

Hell no, they died ten months apart
and Elias had an open casket funeral
with all his friends there.

ANGEL

(after a moment)

Is that all you want, Tommy?

ROCKFORD

Yeah...Look, can I keep this?

ANGEL

Sure.

He shuts off the lights and heads out of the file room. As he
is closing the door, he looks at Sara.

ANGEL

Tom and me go way back...We was in
the pen together.

(a beat)

We was both framed.

110 ANGLE - SARA

110

Her head snaps around and she looks at Rockford with a startled
look as the door to the filing room closes, cutting the rest of
the scene from sight.

CUT TO

111 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - NIGHT

111

They are parked in front of the newspaper office. Rockford
is looking at the news clipping. Sara is looking at him and
is strangely quiet.

ROCKFORD

What did your father look like at
the end?

SARA

What?

ROCKFORD

Well, you said he was a wino for
about a year...That must've changed
him quite a lot.

Sara thinks about this for a moment, then nods her head.

ROCKFORD

What'd he look like?

SARA

Old and frail...But he didn't even
faintly resemble Mr. Elias there....

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED

111

Rockford taps the photograph on the steering wheel for a moment, then nods his head.

ROCKFORD

Yeah...I'll drive you home.

He starts the car and pulls out.

ROCKFORD

Sara, I want you to tell me about your father...Everything you can remember about him for the last year or so....

SARA

I don't think that will help.

ROCKFORD

It probably won't, but you never can tell...There's some kind of connection between your dad and the late Mr. Elias...We have to find it.

SARA

Well, there's not much to tell really...He used to be an advertising account executive...He made a good living and we had a very happy family life...Then after Mother died, he just went down hill...The next thing we knew he was on Skid Row.

ROCKFORD

Is there anything else besides your mother's death that could have caused him to give up like that? Is it possible there was another reason he started drinking?

SARA

(stiff)

He didn't give up...I mean he shouldn't have.

Sara now seems to lose herself in her memories. As she talks, her face becomes sad, close to tears.

SARA

I used to go to Skid Row and try and bring him home.

(a beat)

Once I caught him selling his blood to get money for more wine. I found out he was giving blood under three different names.

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED - 2

111

SARA (Cont'd)

(a beat)

He was actually bleeding himself to death...

(a beat)

Then once I couldn't find him for several weeks...I almost came apart because I was afraid he'd died and was buried some place and I'd never know where...I took time off from my work...I went down to Skid Row and prowled around...I was mugged and almost raped...I couldn't find him...I was sure he was dead....

Sara is now totally lost in the recollection. Rockford watches her with an expression of sorrow and respect.

SARA

Then one day I was down at the St. Anne Mission where they give out free meals...I started asking around for him...and I looked up and there he was...so drunk he didn't even recognize me...I took him out and fed him some food and asked him where he'd been....

ROCKFORD

What'd he say?

SARA

Nothing really...

(a beat)

He always liked to talk in metaphors...

(a beat)

A hold-over from the advertising profession. He would grin at me and say he'd been visiting the Elysian fields...or he had gone to the desert for his health.

ROCKFORD

When was this? What date?

SARA

I don't know...Sometime last year ...I can't remember.

ROCKFORD

You said you took time off to try and find him...When was that?

Sara thinks about it for a moment, then reaches into her purse

CONTINUED

111 CONTINUED - 3

111

and pulls out her wallet. She removes a pocket-calendar and studies it for a moment.

SARA

It was in June of last year -- the first two weeks in June.

ROCKFORD

In other words, the time he was missing was just about the time Elias died.

Sara reacts to the connection. Rockford stares out the front window of the car, lost in his own thoughts. After a moment, Sara speaks:

SARA

What does it mean?

ROCKFORD

I don't know... Maybe nothing, but it's just another coincidence piled up on top of several others....

CUT TO

111-A INT. SARA'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

111

Rockford is prowling the living room. There are no lamps in the living room, so the only light is coming from the view windows. Rockford is looking for a lamp.

ROCKFORD

Where's the lamp?

SARA'S VOICE

No lamps. Candles. Saves on electricity.

Rockford moves to a fireplace, takes up a candelabra, lights the candles. Over the fireplace is a large painting of Harvey Butler in his advertising days in conservative suit and tie. Rockford studies it with the candelabra, then sets it down. During this, we hear:

SARA'S VOICE

Were you really in prison, Tom?

ROCKFORD

Does it matter?

SARA'S VOICE

Of course it matters.

On this, Sara reappears. She has changed out of the slinky black dress into something more casual.

ROCKFORD

I did five years in the state pen.

CONTINUED

111-A CONTINUED

111-A

SARA

For what?

ROCKFORD

Armed robbery.

SARA

Did you do it?

ROCKFORD

Would you believe me if I said no?

SARA

Probably not.

ROCKFORD

Okay, then why mess with it....

He turns and moves over to the candelabra and begins to study the two photographs. One is the news clipping, the other is the one from Jerry's album.

ROCKFORD

Did you check the hospitals during the time your father was missing?

Sara moves over toward him. She puts a hand on his shoulder and turns him around.

SARA

I'm sorry...That was mean. If you told me you were innocent, I'd believe you. I really would.

ROCKFORD

It's not important to me anymore.

(a beat)

It used to be...I wanted people to know I was innocent...I had a pardon from the governor saying it never happened...For a while, I had it framed hanging in my office...

(a beat)

One day I looked at it and it wasn't important anymore so I took it down.

SARA

And you think I ought to take my father's picture down?

ROCKFORD

I won't tell you what to do, Sara. I gave up that habit in prison. One of the few constructive things I learned there.

DONTINUED

111-A CONTINUED - 2

111-A

SARA

I want to hear what you think.

ROCKFORD

(a long beat)

I think you're hurt that your father didn't turn to you when your mother died...Instead, he turned to a bottle of wine... You can't make it up to him now.

111-B ANGLE - SARA

111-B

She turns away from him and moves halfway across the room, then spins back on him.

SARA

But somebody did kill him and whoever it is should be caught.

ROCKFORD

The trick is to keep from getting caught yourself.

(a long beat)

You're talking to an expert. I spent five years of my life in that trap. It's hard to climb out.

A long moment follows, then Sara moves back to him, looks at him for a long beat, then reaches out and takes his hand.

SARA

(softly)

You're a sentimentalist. How strange....

ROCKFORD

Not really.

(a beat)

I like you, Sara.

There is another long silence before she answers and when she does, it is with a slight bit of surprise at the realization.

SARA

I like you, too.

Rockford pulls her near and kisses her. We hold for a long moment, then

CUT TO

111-C INT. PANELED OFFICE - NIGHT

111-C

A tough-looking man in his mid-thirties is on the phone. There are two slot machines on the wall behind him. His name is Morrie Talbot.

TALBOT

Okay, Jerry, I suppose I can do that...When can you get here?

112 OMITTED

112

113 INT. MILDRED ELIAS'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

113

Jerry Grimes is on the phone. Mildred Elias is sitting on the sofa nearby, with a worried look on her face. Intercut:

JERRY

I'll catch a flight to Vegas in the morning and call you then.

TALBOT

It's gonna cost you, Sweets. I don't do this kinda thing for favors.

JERRY

I know it's gonna cost.
(a beat)
Just get the plane.

TALBOT

It's gonna be ten grand. That includes everything.

JERRY

Okay, stay handy.
(a beat)
And Morrie, I'm buying you. Don't bring in some outta work bouncer.

TALBOT

Just call me. I'll be in the casino.

Jerry hangs up the phone and turns toward Mildred. She looks slightly alarmed.

MILDRED

Whatta you going to do? You're gonna kill somebody else.

JERRY

Shut up.

CONTINUED

113 CONTINUED

113

Mildred gets to her feet and moves toward him. She is getting mad now.

MILDRED

No, I won't shut up. I don't want any killing. You never told me about killing that old wino. I don't want to be a part of any more killings.

Jerry grabs her and whacks her twice across the mouth, then jerks her forward.

JERRY

Listen, you silly bitch. We're in trouble. You got us in trouble and if I could get away with it, I'd pull your chain right now.

MILDRED

Stop it! Let go of me!

JERRY

I need twenty grand. Let's have it.

MILDRED

No! You're going to hire a killer!
I won't.

He hits her again, then shoves her against the couch. She slams her head against the side of the sofa. Jerry grabs her throat and jams it back against the couch. Her eyes go wide with fright. Jerry starts talking in the soft, almost cooing voice he used when he killed Harvey Butler. We get the feeling he's lost control.

JERRY

You're doing fine, honey...Just fine...Just relax now and old Jerry will make it better....

Mildred begins to choke, her face gets red -- Jerry is about to strangle her.

MILDRED

(a croak)

The money...My money...No more money.

She seems to get through to him and he relaxes his grip. His manner seems to shift slightly.

CONTINUED

113 CONTINUED - 2

113

JERRY

How 'bout that...I almost killed the Golden Goose. I kill you, I'm outta business, right?

Mildred sits up and looks at him, this time with absolute horror in her eyes. She rubs her neck.

JERRY

I need twenty grand.

MILDRED

I won't pay you to have someone killed. Please, Jerry....

JERRY

I'm not gonna kill anyone. I'm gonna rough him up and then buy him.

(a beat)

Get the money.

MILDRED

What's wrong with the money I keep sending you?

JERRY

Get the money.

MILDRED

I don't have twenty thousand dollars here. I'll have to get it in the morning.

Jerry looks at her for a long moment.

JERRY

Okay, I'm spending the night.

(a beat)

Won't that be fun?

Mildred gives him a look that would kill and he slaps her across the face again, this time playfully.

CUT TO

114 OMITTED

114

115 EXT. ROCKFORD'S OFFICE TRAILER - NIGHT

115

His car pulls in and parks next to the trailer. Rockford and Sara get out. Rockford takes out his keys and they enter the trailer.

116 INT. TRAILER - NIGHT

116

Rockford turns on the light, moves over to the phone and dials a number.

CUT TO

117 INT. MOUNTAIN CABIN - NIGHT

117

This is a rustic fishing cabin. After a moment, Joseph Rockford answers the phone. He looks like he has been asleep. Intercut with Tom Rockford.

JOSEPH

Yeah?

ROCKFORD

Hi, Rocky. It's me.

JOSEPH

(pleased)

Hey, Tommy, you gonna come up after all?

ROCKFORD

No. I need some help.

JOSEPH

I'll help you bait a hook if you can get up here. They're really biting, Tommy.

ROCKFORD

You still buddies with that guy in the City Administrator's office in Las Vegas?

JOSEPH

Yeah. I guess I ain't seen him since two years ago.

ROCKFORD

I need to get into the Las Vegas City Hall tonight.

JOSEPH

Can't do it, Tommy.

ROCKFORD

Why not?

JOSEPH

'Cause he lives in a trailer park and he don't have no phone.

CONTINUED

117

CONTINUED

117

ROCKFORD

A City Administrator who lives in
a trailer park...Whatta you talking
about?

JOSEPH

Well, he ain't exactly a City Admin-
istrator, Tommy....

ROCKFORD

But you said ---

JOSEPH

Yeah, I know what I said...But I
was exaggerating a little.

ROCKFORD

(hopefully)

He's an Assistant City Administrator?

JOSEPH

No.

ROCKFORD

What is he, Dad?

JOSEPH

He's a janitor in the City Adminis-
trator's office.

Rockford makes a face.

ROCKFORD

Boy, you're sure one hell of a
liar.

JOSEPH

I wasn't lying, Tommy. I wouldn't
lie. Think about it...I told you
he was cleaning up in the City
Administrator's office. That's
what I said.

ROCKFORD

Aww, Rocky, that's a bad joke from
vaudeville.

(a beat)

Does he have a set of keys? Can
he get me into City Hall?

JOSEPH

I don't know. It's Saturday.

CONTINUED

117 CONTINUED - 2

117

ROCKFORD

I need help. Drive to Vegas and get him up. Tell him I'll meet him at City Hall in four hours.

JOSEPH

That's a two-hour drive from here, Tom. It's gonna cost ya.

ROCKFORD

I'll pay ya fifty bucks, plus welching privileges.

JOSEPH

(a long beat)
Tom, you're not in any trouble, are you?

ROCKFORD

No, Dad, I'm okay.

JOSEPH

Okay, I'll see ya in four hours.

117-A RESUME - ROCKFORD AND SARA

117-A

Rockford hangs up and looks at Sara, who is smiling.

SARA

You aren't having much of a day for profits...You already gave me fifty and now your father gets fifty....

ROCKFORD

You're paying his fifty. That's expenses.

SARA

(dry)
You're really something....

ROCKFORD

~~Whatta you getting so up-tight about?~~ I got you welching privileges.
I didn't have to do that, y'know.

Rockford crosses to his desk on this and unlocks the bottom drawer. He takes out a tin box and places it on his desk and starts to unlock it.

CONTINUED

117-A CONTINUED

117-A

ROCKFORD

I'll tell you how to do it...With any skill at all, you'll get him down to ten or twelve bucks.

Rockford opens the tin box.

SARA

(indicating box)

What's that?

ROCKFORD

That's my gat.

SARA

What?

ROCKFORD

My gun.

He opens the box and takes out a Smith & Wesson thirty-eight, six inch, and drops it in the side pocket of his coat.

SARA

You mean you didn't have a gun on you when I picked up Jerry?

ROCKFORD

No, why?

SARA

(mad)

Well, what if he'd tried to rape me? I mean, I thought you were carrying a gun.

ROCKFORD

I can't. I haven't got a permit to carry a gun.

SARA

But you're a private investigator.

ROCKFORD

You oughta see what you gotta go through downtown to get a permit to carry a concealed weapon. It's impossible. Nobody's got permits except the guys on TV, and I figure they don't really count.

Rockford closes the tin box, puts it back in his desk drawer and slams it shut. On the slam:

CUT TO

118 EXT. DESERT HIGHWAY - NIGHT

118

as Rockford's car flashes past camera.

119 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - NIGHT

119

Rockford is driving. Sara is sleeping. Rockford looks over at Sara for a long moment. Play this for all it's worth, then we hear the sound of a truck's horn, and Rockford looks back at the road and swerves the wheel as a truck roars past.

CUT TO

120 thru 122 OMITTED

120 thru 122

123 EXT. LAS VEGAS HOTEL STRIP - DAY

123

As we watch Rockford's car pull past camera.

CUT TO

124 EXT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - DAY

124

There are two cars parked in front of the building. One of them is Rockford's.

125 INT. MUNICIPAL BUILDING - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

125

Joseph Rockford is with another man. The other man is Arnold Demura. He is about Joseph's age and is wearing a workman's outfit. As we watch, the elevator doors open and Rockford and Sara exit and head over to where Joseph and Arnold are standing.

JOSEPH

(handling introductions)

This is my son, Tom, and his client,
Sara...I'd like you to meet Arnold
Demura....

Rockford shakes hands.

ROCKFORD

Nice to meet you.

(to Joseph)

My father's told me so much about
you.

Joseph Rockford grins at his son with real pleasure. Rockford looks at Arnold.

CONTINUED

125

CONTINUED

125

ROCKFORD

What I need is to find out who performed the marriage ceremony for Mr. and Mrs. William Elias.

ARNOLD

It must be pretty important, huh, to pull us all out of bed at six a.m.?

ROCKFORD

It is.

ARNOLD

(crafty)

How important?

Rockford looks over at his father.

JOSEPH

I didn't say anything to him....

ROCKFORD

It'll come outta your end, Rocky.

Joseph looks at Arnold.

JOSEPH

Forget the shakedown, Arnie. He ain't going for it.

Arnold nods his head, then leads them up the hall. He takes out a set of keys and opens a frosted glass door that has the words Civil Records printed on it in gold letter.

125-A EXT. LAS VEGAS AIRPORT - DAY

125-A

A car pulls away from the terminal. Seated in the front seat are Morrie Talbot and Jerry Grimes. Grimes is looking at his watch as Morrie drives.

JERRY

Come on, move it.

TALBOT

Relax. It ain't far from here.
Just over on Main.

CUT TO

126

INT. OFFICE - DAY

126

This is really a filing room. Arnold turns on the lights and moves over toward one end of the room. He moves down the aisle of filing cabinets and finally pauses in front of one, then pulls open the drawer.

127 TIGHT SHOT - THE DRAWER

127

As Arnold rummages through it, finally pulls out a folder and opens it up, then takes out a sheaf of papers.

128 NEW ANGLE - FULL

128

Arnold hands the papers to Rockford, who looks at them.

129 TIGHT SHOT - THE PAPERS

129

Zoom in to the name: Danford Baker - Minister.

130 RESUME - ROCKFORD

130

He hands the papers back and grabs Sara's arm and pulls her out of the office. Joseph looks over at Arnold.

JOSEPH

Nice kids.

Arnold grunts, as we:

CUT TO

131 EXT. CITY ADMINISTRATOR'S BUILDING - DAY

131

Rockford and Sara exit the building and jump into his car. It squeals away from the building.

132 INT. CAR - DAY

132

Rockford is driving fast.

SARA

What do you think is happening?

ROCKFORD

I'm not sure...I got a wild idea...
If it's right, it might explain
everything.

SARA

Why won't you tell me?

ROCKFORD

I'm superstitious.

She looks over at him and doesn't have anything to say to that. Finally, she comes up with a reason.

CONTINUED

132 CONTINUED

132

SARA

You're afraid if you're wrong,
you'll look stupid.

ROCKFORD

That, too.

Hold for a beat, and:

CUT TO

133 EXT. WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

133

The angle favors the street and we can see a car approaching from the distance. It slows down and turns into the driveway.

133-A CLOSER - WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

133-A

It is one of those cheesy little buildings with a cockroach-ridden motel behind it. Get hitched and laid in ten minutes. Talbot's car pulls up, both men get out, and enter the chapel. A sign out front reads: Danford Baker, Minister -- Weddings, Free Room with TV.

133-B INT. WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

133-B

Jerry and Talbot move forward. As they do, a wedding service is in progress. Danford Baker, a man in his mid-fifties, is marrying a couple who look like they are better off single. The motel maid and the janitor are the witnesses. His voice drones on as Jerry and Talbot come to a stop in the doorway of the chapel. The camera pans in on them as they watch, then they move back out of sight as the wedding continues.

BAKER

Do you, Carolyn Neal, take this man
as your lawfully wedded husband to
love and to cherish....

CUT TO

134 OMITTED

134

135 EXT. COMMERCIAL STREET - DAY

135

Rockford's car is moving at about twenty miles an hour.

136 INT. CAR - DAY

136

Sara is looking at house numbers.

CONTINUED

136 CONTINUED

136

SARA

Slow down, I can't read them.

Rockford slows down.

CUT TO

136-A INT. WEDDING CHAPEL - CLOSE ON A RECORD PLAYER

136-A

as the arm goes down on the spinning forty-five record and we hear the wedding march.

BAKER'S VOICE
You may kiss the bride.

136-B PULL BACK TO FULL SHOT

136-B

The wedding is over and the newly married couple move off as Baker closes his Bible and places it on a small podium. The maid and janitor leave. As this is happening, Jerry and Talbot move into the room and approach him.

JERRY
Mr. Baker?

Baker spins around and looks at them.

JERRY
Come on outside.BAKER
I'm sorry, I don't understand...
Where's the bride?JERRY
(to Talbot)
Come on, let's go.

Jerry whips out a gun and takes Baker by the arm. They hustle him out of the wedding chapel.

136-C EXT. WEDDING CHAPEL - DAY

136-C

They move the startled Minister to Jerry's car and shove him in. He starts to fight back and Jerry Grimes whacks him across the side of the head with his gun. Baker slumps forward and Jerry starts to load him quickly into the back seat.

CUT TO

136-D INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - DAY

136-

Rockford and Sara.

136-E ROCKFORD'S POINT OF VIEW - THE WEDDING CHAPEL

136-

as Baker is being loaded into the car.

136-F RESUME - FULL SHOT - THE STREET

136-

Rockford is already past the chapel as Jerry jumps into the car. Talbot is behind the wheel and they roar off in the opposite direction from Rockford.

137
thru
139 OMITTED137
thru
139

140 EXT. STREET - DAY

140

Rockford stands on it and executes a skidding one-eighty turn and heads after Grimes.

141 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - DAY

141

Sara looks over at him with disbelief.

SARA
Whatta you doing? It's back the other way.

ROCKFORD
Not any more. Buckle up and start praying.

142 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

142

As Rockford's car tries to close the distance, his car bounces through intersections.

CUT TO

143 INT. JERRY GRIMES' CAR - DAY

143

Talbot, looking his his rearview mirror is watching Baker, who is unconscious in the back seat. Jerry and Talbot are both nervy.

TALBOT
(upset)
We got trouble. There a guy back there. We better dump this guy, it could be the heat.

CONTINUED

143 CONTINUED

143

JERRY
(looks up)
Too late...He's dead.

TALBOT
Dead?

JERRY
I hit him too hard. Keep going,
but don't lose him.

TALBOT
Why? Whatta you talking about?

JERRY
I think he saw us kill Baker...
(softly)
Besides, I know that guy and I
owe him.

144 EXT. CITY STREET - RUNBY - DAY

144

First, Grimes' car, then Rockford's.

145 SERIES OF SHOTS - RUNBYS - DAY

145

As Grimes' car heads out of Las Vegas and squeals out onto a lightly trafficked two-lane highway, it seems to be pulling away from Rockford's.

146 SERIES OF SHOTS - THE HIGHWAY - DAY

146

Play this for as long as time will allow. Both cars moving at a high rate of speed but with each set of runbys, Rockford seems to be falling a little further behind.

147 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - DAY

147

Sara is straining to see the car ahead.

147-A INT. JERRY'S CAR - DAY

147-A

Jerry is looking back through the rear window, then he turns to Talbot.

JERRY
I told ya -- don't run away from
him.

TALBOT
I'm not. Take it easy.

147-B EXT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - RUNBY - DAY

147-B

147-C INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - DAY

147-C

Rockford is driving for all he's worth.

SARA

We're not losing them.

ROCKFORD

We're not catching them either.
This crate needs a tune up.

148 THEIR POINT OF VIEW - THE HIGHWAY AHEAD

148

Grimes' car appears to make a right-hand turn and heads, at a high rate of speed, out a dirt road, leaving a trail of dust behind.

149 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

149

After a moment, Rockford's car slows to make the turn, then skids and heads up the dirt road, leaving a cloud of dust behind it.

CUT TO

150 EXT. SMALL LANDING STRIP - DAY

150

As we watch, Grimes skids his car to a stop next to a Red Piper Apache, which is standing at the end of the strip. Grimes and Talbot scramble out of the car and grab Danford Baker and drag him toward the plane.

151 EXT. DIRT ROAD - RUNBY - DAY

151

As Rockford's car screeches past camera, leaving a trail of dust in its wake.

152 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - ANGLE THROUGH WINDSHIELD - DAY

152

as he comes up on the landing strip with the Piper Apache. By now, Grimes, Talbot and Danford Baker are in the Apache and its engine is revving. It starts down the runway as Rockford turns onto the landing strip and attempts to head it off.

153 EXT. LANDING STRIP - DAY

153

as the Piper Apache roars down the strip and running along beside it, attempting to get in front, is Rockford's car.

154 NEW ANGLE - RUNWAY - DAY

154

as Rockford attempts to head the plane off, but it is already airborne, lifting off over his car and into the sky.

155 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - DAY

155

He screeches on the brakes and skids to a stop, then leans forward and looks up through the windshield at the plane, which is fast climbing out of sight. Sara looks at Rockford for a long moment.

SARA

What now?

ROCKFORD

We go back into town and I give all of this to the Las Vegas cops. Let them worry about picking Grimes and his buddy up.

SARA

Will you explain it to me...What the hell is going on?

ROCKFORD

I'll tell you on the way back.

He starts the car, turns it around, and heads back up the dirt road.

CUT TO

156 EXT. PIPER APACHE - IN FLIGHT - DAY

156

As we watch, the door is opened and a body falls from the plane. We pan it down from perhaps three or four thousand feet. It lands somewhere in the middle of a huge open lake.

157 INT. PIPER APACHE

157

as Grimes closes the door of the airplane and looks over at Talbot, who is flying.

GRIMES

What's left of him will end up getting eaten by the brine shrimp.

TALBOT

Shut up.

Grimes doesn't say anything and Talbot looks at him with contempt. Hold for a beat, and

CUT TO

158 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

158

Rockford's car moves along the dirt road.

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

Mildred and her ten-million-dollar
bridegroom leave the wedding party
in L.A., fly to Vegas, check into
their motel ---

159 INT. THE CAR

159

Rockford glances at Sara for effect.

ROCKFORD

-- and Old Man Elias dies.

SARA

(mouth ajar)

Before the wedding?

Rockford nods sagely and Sara stares out the window at the desert road. Finally:

SARA

You got the rest of it worked out?

ROCKFORD

Sure. She calls Jerry Grimes and tells him she just lost ten million bucks. Jerry says, 'You got all the papers signed? -- license, all that?' and Mildred says 'Yeah, but he's dead!'

160 EXT. THE CAR

160

Still moving along that dirt road.

ROCKFORD'S VOICE

And Jerry says, 'Sit tight, baby. Throw an electric blanket on him and keep him warm. I'll be there in two hours with a substitute. You're gonna get married first, and then call for a doctor!'

161 INT. THE CAR

161

Sara gets it all now.

CONTINUED

161

CONTINUED

161

SARA

And he picked up my father because
the age was right?

ROCKFORD

(nods)

Your father decided to stay in
Vegas a while.

(pauses)

When he got back to L.A. he must've
sobered up just long enough to
find out Mildred Elias had inherited
ten million bucks.

SARA

He wouldn't do that. Try to black-
mail them? He wouldn't.

ROCKFORD

(shrugs)

Maybe he didn't. But they killed
him.

There is a long moment of silence.

SARA

I wish we'd caught them.

ROCKFORD

We'll turn it back to the cops and
eventually they will...

(a beat)

At least, we'll get it out of the
inactive file.

Sara looks over at Rockford and nods. Her expression shows
that she is feeling a mixture of emotions. Hold for a beat,
and:

CUT TO

162

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

162

as Rockford's car continues along the unpaved road toward the
highway. It flashes past and the camera tilts up and in the
blue morning sun we can see a speck of red begin to drop out
of the sun. As it gets nearer, we can hear the single engine
drone of the Piper Apache.

163

INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - DAY

163

as they continue along, unaware of the impending danger.

164 EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

164

as the Piper Apache banks and makes a low pass at Rockford's car.

165 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - DAY

165

Rockford sees it first and pulls Sara down onto the floor, then jerks the wheel and skids the car around. As he does, there is the sound of rapid machine pistol fire. Several slugs pound into the car with deadening thunks.

166 NEW ANGLE - CAR - DAY

166

Rockford screams the car around and heads for a low hill off to one side of the road. The car bounces over the rough desert ground; the engine is beginning to miss badly; two of the slugs have been fired into the hood. The Piper Apache is now at the end of its pass and is banking around for another run at Rockford's car.

167 NEW ANGLE - SECOND PASS

167

The red airplane comes back toward Rockford's car. It is now flying only a few feet above the desert floor. As it heads at the car, we again hear the sound of machine pistol fire. Slugs pound into the car, which now shudders to a stop. The plane flashes past and climbs into the sky, banking around for another pass.

168 INT. ROCKFORD'S CAR - DAY

168

He is fumbling in his glove compartment for his pistol. He yells at Sara to get in the back seat. She scrambles into the back seat as, through the front windshield, we see the Piper Apache bank and head back toward the car. Rockford leans his hand on the door-jam and as the plane screams toward him, the machine pistol ripping holes in the metal, Rockford discharges three or four rounds at the plane. It swoops overhead and banks for another pass.

ROCKFORD

Damn!

SARA

What's wrong?

ROCKFORD

I missed him! This thing pulls to the right. I didn't correct for it.

CONTINUED

168 CONTINUED

168

SARA

He's coming back.

The plane makes another pass and as Sara ducks, Rockford empties the rest of the revolver at the plane.

169 EXT. CAR - DAY

169

It has caught fire and is beginning to smoulder.

170 INT. CAR

170

Sara smells the fire.

SARA

I think we're on fire.

Rockford is struggling with the revolver, trying to load it. He drops several slugs. He finally gets it loaded as the plane makes another pass, the machine pistol ripping slugs into the doors and through the top. As soon as it has passed and makes its banking turn, Rockford throws the door open and Sara and he jump out and start running away from the burning car. The plane now makes another climbing turn and then starts toward them with another pass.

171 ANGLE - ROCKFORD - SARA

171

as they run toward camera, the plane closing the ground behind them. After a few beats, we can hear the chattering of the machine pistol as the slugs tear up the ground around them. Rockford spins around and, aiming with both hands, fires the gun at the plane, which swoops overhead, about fifteen feet off the ground. Both he and Sara dive out of the way as the plane screams past.

172 THEIR POINT OF VIEW - THE AIRPLANE

172

It climbs into the sky and starts to make a banking turn. It stays in the turn and makes another pass at them, only this time it doesn't head directly at them but is off about five degrees.

173 ANGLE - ROCKFORD, SARA

173

They are flat on their stomachs, watching, then they scramble to their feet, ready to run, but the plane keeps heading in slightly the wrong direction, and then it drops a wing and plunges behind the low hill. After a moment, there is an explosion and a ball of flame.

174 NEW ANGLE - ROCKFORD AND SARA

174

They look at each other for a long moment, then move uncertainly toward the hill.

DISSOLVE TO

175 ANOTHER ANGLE - SARA, ROCKFORD

175

They stand silently watching from a hilltop.

176 THEIR POINT OF VIEW - THE AIRPLANE

176

A wreck that nobody could survive. It is burning on the desert floor.

177 RESUME - ROCKFORD AND SARA

177

looking down at the burning wreckage, then Rockford looks at Sara.

ROCKFORD
Was it worth it, Sara?

She looks at Rockford for a long moment, then slowly shakes her head.

SARA
(softly)
No.

178 RESUME - BURNING PLANE

178

Its flames filling the camera, then freeze frame.

FADE OUT

EPILOGUE

FADE IN

179 EXT. LAS VEGAS POLICE STATION - DAY

179

An old brick building which has been baked by the sun.

180 INT. POLICE SQUAD ROOM - DAY

180

This is bustling with activity; there are hookers, drunks and every kind of humanity. Amidst it all, officers in blue-striped pants seem to act as if there is an efficiency about it all. At one end of the room is a bank of three slot machines. Seated at the other end of the room is Tom Rockford. He is talking to a detective named Norm Mitchell. Mitchell is heavy-set and looks like he's perpetually angry. Sara is nearby, listening.

MITCHELL

Well, where did you get it?

ROCKFORD

What?

MITCHELL

The gun. You ain't got no permit to carry a gun.

ROCKFORD

Look, you're missing the point.
Those guys probably killed a Minister named Danford Baker.

MITCHELL

His body wasn't found in the wreckage...Just Grimes and some guy named Talbot.

ROCKFORD

Did you call Detective Becker and give him the information I gave you?

MITCHELL

Yeah.

ROCKFORD

And?

MITCHELL

He said he'd call back after he'd checked it.

CONTINUED

180 CONTINUED

180

ROCKFORD

What about the signature cards on
the record book of the Minister?
Have you checked 'em against the
marriage license?

MITCHELL

We're doing all that.

(a beat)

Meanwhile, I want to know where
you got that gun. You may not
know it, Buster, but you can't go
around shooting down light aircraft
with hand guns.

The phone rings and Mitchell snatches it up.

MITCHELL

Mitchell.

(a beat)

Yeah...

(a beat)

Yeah...Okay...Sure.

(a beat)

You know this Rockford guy?

(a beat)

Fine, but I ain't through with him
yet. I'm gonna have an F.A.A. in-
vestigation, and I got two dead
bodies.

(a beat)

I don't know, but I'm holding him
on a gun law beef.

Rockford looks over at Sara, who looks really sad. He grins
at her and shrugs.

MITCHELL

Okay, I'll tell him.

Mitchell hangs up the phone and looks at Rockford.

MITCHELL

That was Becker in L.A....He said
to tell you he picked up Mrs. Elias.

SARA

Are you really going to hold him?

MITCHELL

You better believe it!

As this is happening, there is a commotion on the far side of

CONTINUED

180 CONTINUED - 2

180

the room. We can see that it is Joseph Rockford. He is arguing with a uniformed officer.

JOSEPH

No, I gotta see him. He's my son.

OFFICER

Relax, pop. He's in custody.

JOSEPH

For what?

OFFICER

Shooting down a light aircraft with a hand gun.

Joseph looks startled by this and then looks off across the room at Sara and Rockford.

181 RESUME - ROCKFORD, SARA, MITCHELL

181

Mitchell finally shrugs.

MITCHELL

Okay, Rockford...

(a beat)

I'm gonna take you back and book you now.

He stands up and Rockford looks at him for a moment.

ROCKFORD

What's the charge?

MITCHELL

Material witness till I get this all shook out.

He turns to Sara, who stands up.

MITCHELL

You can go, Miss.

She looks at Rockford for a long moment, then turns to Mitchell.

SARA

Could I have a moment with him?

Mitchell hesitates for a beat, then nods and takes a step away.

CONTINUED

181 CONTINUED

181

SARA

Thanks, Tom...I'm sorry about all
this...I feel responsible....

ROCKFORD

Well, they won't hold me long and
I'll only charge you half-price
for the time I spend in jail.

SARA

You're kidding?

ROCKFORD

(a grin)

Yeah.

Mitchell moves back to Rockford and Sara but before he can put his hand on Rockford's arm, Sara throws herself into his arms and gives him a giant hug, then they part and Mitchell leads Rockford away. Sara watches him go for a moment and then turns and moves over to where Joseph Rockford is standing. Together, they watch Rockford being led across the room toward the jail complex. Joseph is disgusted and turns to Sara.

JOSEPH

Look at that. He's back in the pokey. Last time, it took me five years to get him out...I had to hock my truck and everything to pay for the lawyers.

Sara looks over at him and says nothing.

JOSEPH

So how does he pay me back? Does he take over the truck and make an honest living? No! He turns into Sam Spade and says he's gonna get other people outta jail. He's gonna only handle closed cases... But what happens is he ends up in jail all the time himself instead...

(a beat)

Who the hell can figure him....

Sara seems to understand.

SARA

Maybe I can....

182 NEW ANGLE - ROCKFORD, MITCHELL - DAY

182

Next to the door to the jail is a sandwich stand with magazines

CONTINUED

182 CONTINUED

182

and a bank of three slot machines. Rockford looks at the slots for a long moment, then over at Mitchell. Rockford reaches into his pocket and takes out a coin and puts it in the slot, pulls the handle and watches the lemons drop. He looks at Mitchell, who grins at him evilly.

ROCKFORD

I'll bet you don't get many winners
in here.

MITCHELL

Ain't that the truth!

He takes Rockford by the arm and starts to lead him through the barred doors, as we freeze frame and

FADE OUT

THE END