

GOOD INTENTIONS

FADE IN:

INT. MALL-DAY

A dilapidated strip mall in a small Texas town.

ETTA MILFORD, 28, short brown hair and stunning pale green eyes, rifles through a rack of men's shirts. She pulls a blue oxford off the rack.

ETTA  
(to herself)  
Dammit Chester, your weight hops  
around so much I don't know your  
size anymore.

She spots a MAN at an adjacent shirt rack.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Excuse me, Sir.

He glances up.

ETTA (cont'd)  
You're about my husband's size.

She walks over to him and holds the shirt up to his chest.

ETTA (cont'd)  
How much do you weigh?

MAN  
I don't know. A buck eighty?

ETTA  
Let me see your stomach.

The man hesitates.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Don't be shy.

She lifts his shirt up. He instinctively sucks in his gut. She pokes his stomach with her finger.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Stop it.

He relaxes and his stomach falls over his belt. He looks around furtively.

ETTA (cont'd)  
You here with your wife?

MAN  
I'm not married.

She looks down at a wedding band on his finger.

ETTA  
You just wear that hoop on your  
finger 'cause it feels good? I  
swear you're all alike. Now go try  
this on. I'll make it worth your  
while.

He hesitates.

ETTA (cont'd)  
I'm double jointed. Now hurry up.

She hands him the shirt and he walks to the dressing room.

ETTA (cont'd)  
(to herself)  
Must be nice to only have one  
thought clanging about your head  
for all eternity.

She walks over to the men's socks, checks to see if she's  
being watched, and quickly removes the price tag from a pair  
of socks.

The man returns carrying the shirt.

MAN  
Fits real good.

He leans toward her.

MAN (cont'd)  
I wish my wife would buy me nice  
things.

Etta grabs the shirt from him.

ETTA  
Maybe she would if you wasn't  
treating the mall like your own  
personal whorehouse.

She walks away. She removes gum from her mouth, attaches it  
to the back of the sock price tag and presses it down on top  
of the shirt price tag.

CUT TO:

INT. STORE-DAY

JO, the cashier, big hair, too much makeup, rings up Etta's shirt.

ETTA  
Mornin' Jo.

JO  
Mornin' Etta. Where are the little fellas?

ETTA  
Strapped in the car.

JO  
You think that's safe?

ETTA  
I got the keys.

Jo runs the scanner over the shirt price tag. The register monitor reads SOCKS \$3.99.

The gum securing the socks price tag to the shirt price tag catches on her fingers. She wipes her hand on her smock.

JO  
I see you're having your own personal sale today.

ETTA  
Everything must go.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT-DAY

TWO MEN stand peering into a station wagon.

Chris, 2, is strapped into a car seat in the backseat of the station wagon. SHANE, 6, sits in the front seat fiddling with the knobs for the radio, heater and windshield wipers.

BALD MAN  
We should do something.

THIN MAN  
Aw, they're fine. Ain't even hot out.

BALD MAN  
What kind of mother leaves her  
children strapped in a car?

Etta approaches the car carrying her shopping bags.

ETTA  
What the hell you doin'?

BALD MAN  
We were walking by the car and that  
little fella was banging on the  
window and we got kinda concerned.

ETTA  
He's two. He eats, shits and bangs  
on windows.

BALD MAN  
Well, I don't think it's right, a  
woman leaving a couple children in  
a car like that.

ETTA  
You don't, do you? Now let me ask  
you, what sounds more right to you;  
a harried mother leaving her  
precious brood in the car for five  
minutes so she can buy them  
sustenance or a strange man peering  
in the window at two defenseless  
little children? 'Cause if you ask  
me, the second one sounds a little  
like a pervert.

The men walk away.

ETTA (cont'd)  
(under breath)  
Fucking Samaritans.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR-DAY

Etta gets in the car and places the bags on the front seat  
between her and Shane.

ETTA  
Now what's going to happen when I  
start this car?

SHANE  
(innocently)  
Nothing.

ETTA  
You sure about that? Because I'll  
tell you right now, mommas in no  
mood to play.

She pulls a box of tampons from the bag.

ETTA (cont'd)  
The circus is in town and momma's  
on edge, so if I start this car  
and...

Shane leans across her and turns off the wipers and radio.

Etta softens.

ETTA (cont'd)  
That's momma's little man. Thank  
you, Shane.

She kisses him on the forehead.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-DAY

Etta walks into the liquor store and removes a coke from the refrigerator. She opens the coke and raises it seductively to her lips as she stares at CHESTER, 29, blonde receding hairline and kind eyes, who leers back at her from behind the counter.

ETTA  
You know, you're kind of hot.

CHESTER  
Sorry lady, I'm a married man.

ETTA  
What's she got that I don't got?

She pulls her shirt up, revealing her bra. Chester quickly looks over at the window.

CHESTER  
Jeez Honey, people are walking by.

ETTA

So? Are you saying you don't want me?

CHESTER

Of course I do. At home, when the kids are asleep and our door is shut just like always.

She drops her shirt down and walks to the counter.

ETTA

The last of the great lovers.

She drops a shopping bag on the counter.

ETTA (cont'd)

I got you something.

He removes the shirt from the bag.

CHESTER

I thought we were saving?

ETTA

I got a deal. Next time Jo comes in you might want to give her a free bottle of something.

CHESTER

Oh, that kind of deal.

ETTA

A deals a deal.

CHESTER

It's a beautiful shirt.

He leans forward and kisses her.

CHESTER (cont'd)

Thanks, babe.

(beat)

Oh, check this out.

He grabs a pamphlet from under the counter and hands it to her.

ETTA

What's this?

CHESTER

Our next investment.

ETTA

Chester, no. Not again.

CHESTER

What? We have to make our money grow. I checked this one out real thorough.

ETTA

You're the kiss of death when it comes to things like this. You give this man any of our money and he'll go belly up within a month.

CHESTER

I only promised \$500.

ETTA

We can't afford to lose \$500.

CHESTER

Who said anything about losing it?

ETTA

You did, the moment you said you were going to invest it. Have you given him the money yet?

CHESTER

Not yet. Listen Etta, I know what I'm doing.

She grabs the shirt from him, drops it in the bag, and pulls the bag off the counter.

ETTA

No you don't, sweet pea. No, you don't.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE-DAY

Etta and her sister, PAM, 26, red hair and freckles, sit at the dinner table with the two children. Chris sits in a high chair smearing food on his face. Shane runs in circles around the table.

PAM

Kyle just doesn't seem to have much to say anymore.



ETTA

Well, he is a man, Pam.

PAM

In the beginning he was always talking. He was interested, you know? How was your day? Did anything interesting happen at work?

Pam looks down at Shane circling the table.

PAM (cont'd)

Shane has a knife.

ETTA

He's just showin' off.

PAM

But now he gets home from work and turns on the TV and don't want to talk anymore. He's still a sweetie, just quiet.

ETTA

Does he want to...you know?

PAM

All the time.

ETTA

Figures. And you let him?

PAM

Sure. I like it, too. He really knows what he's doing, too, although his face gets so twisted up sometimes I have to look away.

ETTA

I think maybe you need to shut down the fun factory for a little while, sister darling. Let him know admission ain't free. That's what I did with Chester. Worked like a charm. It's called breaking their spirit.

CUT TO:

## INT. LIVING ROOM-NIGHT

A small, unpretentious living room with an old sofa and two armchairs. Pam and the kids sit on the sofa watching TV. Etta walks in as she pulls on a coat.

ETTA  
I appreciate this, sis.

PAM  
My pleasure. Where you off to, anyway?

ETTA  
Couple errands. I won't be long.  
Hour at the most.

She walks over and kisses each child on the forehead.

ETTA (cont'd)  
(to Children)  
Now you be good to aunt Pam. Momma loves you.  
(to Pam)  
I think maybe I'll get them some  
I-C-E C-R-E-A-M.

SHANE  
She said ice cream.

ETTA  
Look who's spelling.

CUT TO:

## INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR-NIGHT

A pretty TEENAGE girl, 17, with a blonde ponytail works behind the counter.

ERNIE, a cop, sandy blonde hair, doughy face and a paunch, eats a sundae at a table by the door.

Etta walks in and looks up at a list of flavors hanging from the ceiling.

ETTA  
Let's see. Gimme a pint of Mocha  
chip and a pint of Orange Sherbert.

She turns to Ernie.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Shane sure loves his sherbet.

ERNIE  
Evening, Etta.

ETTA  
Always know where I can find you.  
Slow night?

ERNIE  
Slow year. Had a drunk and  
disorderly last night. That  
qualifies as a regular crime wave  
around here lately, except for  
Chester, of course.

ETTA  
Just you out tonight?

ERNIE  
Robby and Buck are working shifts,  
too. Don't you worry, we're  
keeping an eye on Chester's store.  
We're going to catch that bastard,  
I promise you that.

ETTA  
That would be such a relief, Ernie.  
I do worry for his safety  
sometimes.

The teenager places the pints on the counter.

TEENAGER  
That'll be \$5.50.

Ernie smiles at the teenager.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR-NIGHT

Etta drives along a country road. She stops by a fenced in  
pasture with several cows watching her disinterestedly.

She walks to the fence and opens the gate.

ETTA  
Come here, Henrietta.

A cow ambles toward her.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Good girl.

The cow walks outside the gate and Etta immediately closes it.

She drives away leaving the cow standing right outside the gate, peering back in at the pasture.

Etta drives back along the country road. She pulls up next to a STOP SIGN.

She gets out of the car and retrieves a BASEBALL BAT from the back seat. She slams the bat against the wooden post holding the sign a few times, knocking the post over.

She gets back in her car and drives toward town.

CUT TO:

EXT. VACANT LOT-NIGHT

A PAY PHONE

Etta dials a number. She covers the mouthpiece with a handkerchief.

POLICE DISPATCHER O.S.  
Police Department.

ETTA  
Yes, there's a cow loose near the highway up my Miller Road. I'm awful worried it's going to get hit by a car or something.

POLICE DISPATCHER O.S.  
We'll send somebody out.

ETTA  
Thank you. Please hurry.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET-NIGHT

TWO POLICEMEN sit in a parked squad car.

The driver, ROB, 25 and eager, points a radar gun at passing cars.

ROB

I don't know why they wasted their money on this thing. Don't nobody ever go faster'n twenty miles an hour in this godforsaken town.

BUCK, 40, reads the newspaper in the passenger seat.

BUCK

Why are you always so fired up on giving out tickets? A town like this, chances are it's someone you know. That just makes one more person thinks you're a dick.

Buck points the radar gun at a pedestrian walking down the sidewalk.

The gun reads 2 mph.

ROB

People think I'm a dick?

BUCK

Hell, I don't know. Everybody thinks somebody's a dick. It all balances out in the end. But when you haven't been somewhere long, like yourself, it doesn't make sense to get off on the wrong foot with folks. Just leave 'em be.

ROB

We're cops.

BUCK

I think you focus on that way too much.

The dispatcher's voice comes over the radio.

DISPATCHER'S VOICE

Boys, we got a 387 in progress, Miller Road by the highway 12.

ROB

387?

BUCK

(knowingly)

Cow in the road.

Buck picks up the microphone.

BUCK (cont'd)  
We're on it. Over.

Rob starts the car and drives off.

Moments later two cars drag race down the street at the exact spot where the police car had been parked.

CUT TO:

EXT. VACANT LOT-NIGHT

Etta watches the police car drive past her.

She dials the pay phone.

DISPATCHER'S VOICE  
Police department.

ETTA  
Some sonofabitch knocked down the  
stop sign up by Hazelton Road.  
Somebody's gonna get kilt.

DISPATCHER'S VOICE  
I'll put Ernie on it.

CUT TO:

INT. ICE CREAM PARLOR-NIGHT

MEN'S ROOM DOOR

A man moans inside the men's room.

We hear the dispatcher's voice over a police radio in the bathroom.

DISPATCHER'S VOICE  
Ernie, we got an emergency up by  
Hazelton Road.

ERNIE'S VOICE  
Sonafabitch.

The men's room door bursts opens and Ernie rushes out buckling his belt hurriedly.

A few steps behind him the teenage ice cream parlor worker walks out, wiping her mouth with the back of her hand.

TEENAGER  
I still get that case of beer.

ERNIE  
(annoyed)  
Yes.

TEENAGER  
None of that crap stuff, neither.  
I want Bud.

ERNIE  
I know. I know.

Ernie leaves the ice cream parlor.

The teenager leans against the wall and sprays Binaca in her mouth.

CUT TO:

EXT. VACANT LOT-NIGHT

Etta sits in her station wagon watching the street behind her through the rearview mirror.

ETTA  
(to herself)  
Come on, Ernie. I haven't got all night.

Ernie's police cruiser tears past the vacant lot.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Sorry to disturb your fun, Ernie.

Etta retrieves a TRENCH COAT, a SKI MASK, and a SHOTGUN from the rear of the station wagon. She hides the shotgun under her coat.

She walks to Chester's liquor store two doors down from the vacant lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM-NIGHT

The cow still stands just outside the pasture gate.

Buck opens the gate and tries to coax the cow back inside the pasture.

Rob sits in the police cruiser pointing the radar gun at the cow.

It reads 0 mph.

BUCK  
Put that goddamn thing down and get  
over here and help me.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-NIGHT

Etta, face hidden by the ski mask, calmly opens the door and walks in, shotgun drawn. She locks the glass fronted door and pulls down a shade.

Chester stands at the register. He's more annoyed than scared.

CHESTER  
Oh come on, not again.

Chester puts his hands up halfway.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
I don't know why you're always  
picking on me. There's another  
liquor store on the other side of  
town and you haven't hit him even  
once. It's not fair.

Etta speaks in a gravelly growl.

ETTA  
Money in a bag. Hurry.

Chester opens the register and slowly, defiantly sticks the bills into a paper bag one at a time.

CHESTER  
Twenty. Forty. Sixty. Eighty.

ETTA  
New register?

CHESTER  
Just this afternoon. Nice of you  
to notice.

He stuffs the last of the money in the bag.



ETTA  
You know the routine.

CHESTER  
How can I forget?

He turns and walks to the back room. Etta follows.

CUT TO:

INT. BACK ROOM-NIGHT

There is a desk, swivel desk chair, sofa, TV and small refrigerator. Chester sits down in the chair.

Etta removes a roll of duct tape from her overcoat. She binds his wrists to the chair arms.

CHESTER  
Could you do me a favor and bring rope next time? This stuff stings something awful coming off.

ETTA  
Shoot, you told me that last time. I'm sorry.

CHESTER  
You're sorry?

ETTA  
I'm not trying to hurt you.

CHESTER  
I'll say this, you're the politest thief I ever saw.

ETTA  
Legs.

Chester puts his legs next to the chair legs. Etta binds his legs to the chair. She walks to the refrigerator, removes a bottle of beer, opens it, and places it on the desk next to Chester.

CHESTER  
Hand me that TV guide.

Etta drops the TV guide on his lap.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Now how am I supposed to open it?

Etta opens the TV guide to that night's listings.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Channel 12.

Etta walks over, turns on the TV and turns it to channel 12.  
It is a softcore porn movie. We briefly see a woman's  
breasts.

Etta immediately turns off the TV.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Hey!

ETTA  
You are not watching that.

CHESTER  
Why the hell do you care?

ETTA  
Choose something else.

CHESTER  
I want to watch that.

Etta grabs the TV guide off his lap and looks at it.

She turns on the TV and switches the channel to THE ANTIQUES  
ROADSHOW.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
You have got to be kidding.

ETTA  
Watch it. Maybe you'll learn  
something.

CHESTER  
My wife watches this crap every  
week.

On the TV show an antiques dealer appraises an antique table  
for the individual who brought it on the show.

ANTIQUA DEALER ON TV  
And what do you think this worth in  
today's market?

CHESTER  
(to TV)  
Who cares?

ANTIQUÉ DEALER ON TV  
Well, in today's market, I would  
say this would fetch,  
conservatively, somewhere in the  
range of ten to twelve thousand  
dollars.

CHESTER  
(incredulous)  
For a fucking table?

ETTA  
Yes, for a table. Some people like  
nice things.

She storms out.

CUT TO:

INT. CAR-NIGHT

Etta starts the car. She starts to put the car in reverse,  
but breaks down into sobs.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD-NIGHT

Ernie's patrol car is parked on the side of the road.

He walks over to the stop sign Etta knocked over and picks it  
up.

ERNIE  
Kids.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM-NIGHT

Buck and Rob try to coax the cow back in through the open  
pasture gate. As they do so, two more cows amble out the  
open gate.

BUCK  
Christ. We got a goddamn stampede.

Rob pulls his gun and points it at the cows.

ROB  
Freeze!

CUT TO:

INT. FARM HOUSE-NIGHT

A WOMAN washes dishes at the sink. She glances out the window above the sink and notices the two officers trying to stop the cows.

Her HUSBAND sits at the kitchen table eating dessert.

WOMAN  
Honey, we got a couple policemen  
outside fixin' to shoot the cows.

He stands up and wipes his mouth with a napkin.

HUSBAND  
Our tax money hard at work. That's  
awful good pie, honey.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARM-NIGHT

Buck pulls the squad car to within a few feet of the cows and honks the horn.

The husband walks down the path from the house toward them.

Rob notices him and quickly puts his gun back in his holster.

The husband walks up to the cows and gently guides them back into the pasture, shutting the gate behind them.

ROB  
Evening.

HUSBAND  
Evening.

The husband walks back to the farm house.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROAD-NIGHT

Etta stands at a roadside pay phone. Her car idles on the side of the road.

ETTA

Chester just got hit again.

She hangs up quickly.

CUT TO:

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD-NIGHT

Ernie tries to jam the stop sign pole back into the ground. The pole is taller than he is, so he has to jump up to hit the top of the pole with a hammer. He's out of shape and bends over wheezing after a few leaps.

The dispatcher's voice comes over his walkie-talkie.

DISPATCHER O.S.

Guess who just got robbed?

ERNIE

Again? I'm on it.

Ernie rips the stop sign off the pole. He drags the heel of his shoe across the ground a couple times to create an indentation and jams just the stop sign into the ground. The pole remains lying on the ground. He surveils his handy work.

ERNIE (cont'd)

(To himself)

Well, at least the midgets will stop.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-NIGHT

Chester sits tied to the swivel chair in the back room. He swivels to face the desk, leans over and grabs the open beer bottle with his mouth. He throws his head back, takes a large gulp of beer and then places the bottle back on the desk. He swivels back to face the television.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIQUOR STORE-NIGHT

Ernie pulls his squad car in front of the liquor store.

He saunters in the front door.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-NIGHT

Ernie picks up a bottle of wine to check the price.

ERNIE  
Evening, Chester.

CHESTER O.S.  
I'm back here. Could you lock the  
front door?

Bottle of wine still in hand, Ernie locks the door.

He walks to the back room.

ERNIE  
Where do you get off charging  
\$39.99 for a bottle of wine?

Ernie starts to untie Chester.

CHESTER  
If you'd stop that fella from  
robbing me, I wouldn't have to  
raise my prices. That's the good  
stuff anyway, it's French.

ERNIE  
At least they're good at wine.

Ernie's head blocks Chester's view of the TV. Ernie peers  
around it.

CHESTER  
Move your head a little.

Ernie turns to look at the TV.

ERNIE  
What the hell are you watching?

CHESTER  
People getting their old stuff  
appraised.

Ernie shoots him a disapproving look.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Does it look like I chose the  
channel?

Ernie finishes untying him and Chester stands up, rubbing his wrists where the duct tape had been applied.

ERNIE  
What did the perpetrator look like?

CHESTER  
Short guy wearing a ski mask and  
raincoat, carrying a shotgun. You  
seen anybody strolling about town  
tonight who fits that description?

ERNIE  
No need to get pissy.

CHESTER  
This is the fourth time, Ernie.  
I'm the only crime in town. What  
the hell else to you have to do?

ERNIE  
I left a dicey situation up the  
road a spell to assist you.

CHESTER  
Squirrel get hit by a car?

ERNIE  
This ain't high school anymore,  
Chester. You can't talk to me like  
that.

CHESTER  
You got some fudge sauce hanging  
off your lower lip there, Ernie.

Ernie glares at Chester for a few moments and then slowly removes the fudge sauce with his tongue.

ERNIE  
I need a case of Bud.

CHESTER  
You don't drink Bud.

ERNIE  
Well, it's high time I started  
then, isn't it?

CHESTER  
You know where to find it.

ERNIE  
Put it on my tab?

Chester nods.

ERNIE (cont'd)  
Listen, we are going to catch that  
sonabitch. Starting tomorrow you  
got yourself round the clock  
surveillance. How does that sound?

CHESTER  
I'd like to believe you, Ernie, I  
really would.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN-NIGHT

Etta, Pam, and Shane sit at the kitchen table. Etta doles  
out sherbert to Shane.

ETTA  
And you were a good boy to aunt  
Pam?

SHANE  
Yes.

ETTA  
Pam?

PAM  
He was an angel. Chris is asleep  
upstairs.

SHANE  
It's melting.

ETTA  
That's just God telling you to eat  
it fast, honey.



PAM  
 Kyle came by for a bit while you  
 were out. Hope you don't mind.

ETTA  
 My house is your house, you know  
 that. Did you talk about what I  
 suggested?

PAM  
 Shane was sitting right there.

ETTA  
 Shane, ears off.

Shane puts his hands over his ears.

ETTA (cont'd)  
 (to Pam)  
 See, that's all you got to do.  
 (to Shane)  
 Okay, ears back on, honey.

Shane keeps his hands over his ears. Etta shrugs.

ETTA (cont'd)  
 Oh well.

Shane looks down longingly at his sherbert. Seeing this,  
 Etta shovels the sherbert into his mouth.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM-NIGHT

Etta lies in bed reading a coffee table book on Antiques.  
 She keeps a yellow pen tucked behind her ear and removes it  
 to highlite a paragraph.

The door opens and Chester walks in.

ETTA  
 Evening, honey.

CHESTER  
 Uh huh.

Chester removes his clothes and drops them on the floor.

ETTA  
 That's why we invested in those  
 hangers, sweet pea.

CHESTER  
That sonofabitch robbed me again.  
Can you believe that? Two hundred  
dollars.

ETTA  
Oh no.

She walks over and hugs him.

CHESTER  
That's it. Tomorrow morning I'm  
going down to Jimmy's and buying a  
gun.

ETTA  
You hate guns.

CHESTER  
One of these days I'm going to do  
something wrong and he's going to  
shoot me, I know it.

Chester steps back from the embrace and enters the adjoining  
bathroom.

ETTA  
I saw Ernie just tonight, and he  
said they're going to catch him.  
He was sure of it.

CHESTER  
Ernie. I'll tell you what, a man  
with no arms and no legs could rob  
me and barrel roll to freedom  
before Ernie would ever catch him.

ETTA  
You've heard the statistics, Ches.  
A man's more likely to be shot with  
his own gun than shoot someone else  
with it. I don't know what I'd do  
without you.

He steps out of the bathroom.

CHESTER  
You ever looked down the barrel of  
a rifle?

ETTA  
Shotgun.

CHESTER

What?

ETTA

It was a shotgun.

(beat)

You told me last time it was a  
shotgun.

CHESTER

Whatever it is, I ain't doing it no  
more. This fella is crazed. Great  
big fella, broad shoulders. If he  
was small I could wrestle the gun  
away from him. You remember that  
year I wrestled in high school?

ETTA

No, honey. I don't.

CHESTER

I guess not, you were with Ernie,  
then. I was quick. But this fella  
is just too big. I need some  
protection.

He walks back into the bathroom.

Etta tears up.

ETTA

You never took it this way before.

He pops his head out the bathroom door.

CHESTER

Huh?

ETTA

Gettin' robbed. I never seen you  
so twisted up about it.

CHESTER

Etta, I don't want to die. That's  
all.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM-LATER

The lights are out. Chester lies on his back, his eyes closed. Etta lies on her side, her head resting on his chest.

                  ETTA  
Ches?

                  CHESTER  
Hmm.

                  ETTA  
You still think I'm pretty, right?

                  CHESTER  
Prettiest woman in town.

                  ETTA  
Why is it that a man can love a  
woman and that ain't enough?

                  CHESTER  
I don't follow.

                  ETTA  
Take Pam.

                  CHESTER  
          (mock longingly)  
Pam.

She slaps him playfully.

                  ETTA  
Stop it. Pam's a pretty girl.

                  CHESTER  
Second prettiest woman in town.

                  ETTA  
Sweet. Smart, too. She hides it  
sometimes, 'cause that can scare a  
man.

                  CHESTER  
And?

                  ETTA  
Kyle goes to that club.

CHESTER  
What club?

ETTA  
Shangri-la.

CHESTER  
He's more than old enough.

ETTA  
You've had your little man talks.  
I see you two out in back having a  
beer. He really loves her.

CHESTER  
I think he does without saying it.  
Those aren't always easy words for  
some men.

ETTA  
Then why the hell is he going to a  
titty bar?

CHESTER  
What does that have to do with  
love?

ETTA  
I don't think it's right a man  
loves one woman and then runs  
around watching other women get  
naked.

CHESTER  
That book you're reading about  
antiques. Why do you love those  
antiques so much?

ETTA  
They're beautiful. It's art you  
can use.

She pokes him in the chest.

ETTA (cont'd)  
They're a good investment, too.

CHESTER  
And you like sunsets. They make  
you cry sometimes, I've seen it.  
And that time we went to  
Yellowstone after we were first  
married, you still talk about that.

CHESTER(cont'd)

You remember those mountains we  
drove past, the Grand Tetons?

ETTA

Yes.

CHESTER

Well, the first white man that ever  
saw them was French. He's the  
fellow that named them. It was in  
the tour guide. And he thought  
they were just about the most  
awesome thing he'd ever seen. You  
want to guess what Teton means in  
french? It's a tit.

ETTA

They're not going to name a  
mountain range the Grand Tits.

CHESTER

You can look it up.

ETTA

I will.

CHESTER

Good. And that's how some guys  
feel when they go to titty bars.  
It's like beautiful little sunsets  
as far as the eye can see.

She sits up.

ETTA

That is the stupidest thing I have  
ever heard. I'm telling you right  
now, Chester Milford, you go  
staring at any sunsets and you're  
in for the biggest damn eclipse you  
ever saw.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANTIQUE SHOP-DAY

Etta stops in front of the antique shop, looks both  
directions and walks in.

RANDY, a gaunt man in his mid-30's, dusts the furniture. He  
speaks in a high whine.

RANDY

Well, if it isn't my favorite customer. How's that Shaker chair treating you?

ETTA

Sitting in my kitchen as we speak. Beautiful. Them religious folks sure had a way with wood.

RANDY

I'm glad you like it.

ETTA

My husband keeps trying to sit on it. I have to explain that it's not that kind of chair.

RANDY

It's a sturdy chair.

ETTA

There's plenty of other chairs he can sit in. I came back to take another look at the table we discussed the other day.

RANDY

The bedside table?

ETTA

The mahogany one.

RANDY

Right back here.

They walk to the back of the store.

Etta runs her fingers delicately over the wood.

ETTA

They don't make them like this anymore, do they?

She lifts the price tag which hangs from the drawer knob.

ETTA (cont'd)

Still \$320?

RANDY

I could let it go for three.

ETTA  
Would it be okay if I took a closer  
look?

RANDY  
Certainly.

Etta pulls a penlight from her purse and gets down on her  
knees to check the underside of the table.

She pops her head out from under the table.

ETTA  
I saw this on The Road Show. This  
has never been restored?

RANDY  
To the best of my knowledge, no.

ETTA  
Restoration really hurts the value.

RANDY  
Yes.

ETTA  
I consider this table an  
investment.

She stands up.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Do you know Chester?

RANDY  
Chester?

ETTA  
My husband, he owns the liquor  
store down by the Dairy Queen.

RANDY  
Sure do.

He leans forward and lowers his voice.

RANDY (cont'd)  
I drink somethin' awful.

ETTA  
I'm sorry to hear that.



RANDY  
All part of being, uh, different,  
in a small Texas town.

ETTA  
I have a cousin who is gay.

RANDY  
Everyone does.

ETTA  
Anyway, I'd rather Chester not know  
about my purchases here. He's  
funny about money sometimes, him  
being a man.

CUT TO:

INT. GUN STORE-DAY

JIMMY, 38, the proprietor walks Chester past a wall of guns.

JIMMY  
Four times? Damn. I would have  
shot the fella the first time.

CHESTER  
I don't want to shoot anybody,  
Jimmy, I just want something big.  
I'm looking for a deterrent.

JIMMY  
Shootin' 'em is a deterrent. Best  
deterrent there is.

CHESTER  
Listen, I hate guns.

JIMMY  
Shame on you. Second Amendment  
makes them right. Classic  
Eighteenth Century phraseology.  
Downloaded it off the internet.  
Made photocopies.

He lifts a multi-colored sheath of papers from under the  
counter.

JIMMY (cont'd)  
Want one?

CHESTER  
I'll take your word for it.

JIMMY  
You sure? It's good readin'.

CHESTER  
Nah, I got a book going right now.

JIMMY  
Suit yourself. So you're looking  
for a deterrent? Hmm.

He looks at the guns on the wall behind him. He removes a  
shotgun and puts it on the counter.

JIMMY (cont'd)  
12 gauge shotgun. Pump action.  
Once they hear the shell enter the  
chamber, they're out the door.

Chester picks up the shotgun awkwardly.

JIMMY (cont'd)  
You ever fire a gun before?

CHESTER  
Can't say as I have.

Jimmy walks to the front door, locks it, and flips the OPEN  
sign to CLOSED.

He walks back behind the counter, grabs a box of shells and  
heads to the back door.

JIMMY  
Follow me.

Chester puts the shotgun down and walks toward Jimmy.

Jimmy holds up the box of shells, and motions his head toward  
the shotgun.

JIMMY (cont'd)  
These aren't much good without  
that.

Chester walks back and grabs the shotgun.

CUT TO:

EXT. GUN STORE BACKYARD-DAY

There are THREE TARGETS located directly in front of the adjoining house. One depicts a deer, another a heavy set man, another depicts Jimmy. The deer target and the fat man target are riddled with holes. The Jimmy target is pristine.

JIMMY

Okay, you open the gun like so.

He opens the shotgun.

JIMMY (cont'd)

Place the shells, one each, here and here. And snap it shut. Then.

He pumps the shotgun.

JIMMY (cont'd)

That puts 'em in the chamber.

He hands the shotgun to Chester.

JIMMY (cont'd)

Now all you got to do is aim and shoot.

Chester takes aim at the deer target.

JIMMY (cont'd)

Whoa, whoa. What are you doing?

CHESTER

Aiming.

JIMMY

When was the last time a deer knocked over a liquor store? Aim for the fat guy. Aim for the middle of his body, that gives you plenty of margin for error, 'specially with a 12 gauge.

CHESTER

You got any of those cool yellow glasses?

JIMMY

Yellow glasses?

CHESTER  
Yeah, on TV, all the fellows at the  
shooting range always have cool  
yellow glasses.

JIMMY  
Does this robber of yours wear cool  
yellow glasses?

CHESTER  
No.

JIMMY  
Then you probably don't need them.

Chester takes aim at the large target and fires. The  
buckshot misses the large target and hits the Jimmy target  
dead on.

Jimmy walks to the target and places his finger in one of the  
holes.

JIMMY (cont'd)  
Shit, Ches. You killed me.

He walks back and takes the shotgun from Chester.

JIMMY (cont'd)  
That's what's known as a point of  
reference. Nobody shoots the Jimmy  
target. I'm afraid I cannot in  
good conscience sell you a firearm.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE-DAY

Chester walks in the front door. He immediately notices the  
antique mahogany table Etta bought in the entrance hall.

CHESTER  
Honey?

Etta walks out of the kitchen.

ETTA  
Hi dear.

CHESTER  
What's this?

ETTA  
Antique mahogany table. It's a  
bedside table, but it looked so  
nice here. Isn't it something?

CHESTER  
Where'd it come from?

ETTA  
Uncle Jeffrey.

CHESTER  
Present?

ETTA  
(cheery)  
No, he died.

CHESTER  
Which one was uncle Jeffrey?

ETTA  
You met him at the reunion last  
summer.

CHESTER  
Don't think I did.

ETTA  
Sure you did, he liked you.

She looks down at the table.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Isn't it something?

CHESTER  
You don't seem too broken up about  
it.

ETTA  
'bout what?

CHESTER  
Jeffrey.

ETTA  
Aw, he'd been sick for years. More  
of a relief than anything else.

CHESTER  
Cancer?

Etta thinks about it for a moment.

ETTA

Sure.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN-DAY

CHESTER

I feel guilty. All these relatives of yours keep dying and giving us this antique furniture and I can't even be bothered to remember them.

Etta puts a bowl of soup and a grilled cheese sandwich in front of him.

ETTA

Don't you worry about it none. I got a big family, when you got a big family, a lot of people die. I cut up some tomato for your sandwich, I know you like that.

He smiles.

CHESTER

I went by Jimmy's today.

ETTA

Oh, Chester. No.

CHESTER

Well, you're not the one in the store with the shotgun stuck in your face, are you?

ETTA

What did you get?

CHESTER

I tried to buy a shotgun, but I shot Jimmy so he wouldn't sell it to me.

ETTA

You did what?

CHESTER

Not the real Jimmy. He's got targets in the backyard, and one of them is supposed to be him. That's the one you're not supposed to shoot and I damn near blew its head off.

ETTA

I'm glad to hear that. Some people weren't meant to own guns.

CHESTER

You hunted all through your childhood. You could teach me.

ETTA

Eat your sandwich.

CHESTER

Etta...

ETTA

We have three children, Ches, and they need a father. Far as I'm concerned it's not entirely a bad thing that money got stolen, cause you always just end up frittin' it away on some get rich quick scheme.

CHESTER

Have those children ever wanted for anything?

ETTA

They have not. You are an excellent provider. But what about the future? Do you ever think we might need money down the road for when the kids go to college? We don't save any money. We always talk about it, but then it's gone.

CHESTER

It's no picnic making ends meet.

ETTA

You've been robbed, what, four times now? We're still gettin' by without that money. If we had that money, we could invest it in something.

CHESTER

But we don't have that money.

ETTA

Don't you see, we don't need to spend as much as we do. The five hundred some odd dollars that fella stole, we would have spent it, instead of saved.

She turns and sponges off the counter top.

CHESTER

Etta?

ETTA

Hmm?

CHESTER

How'd you know it was five hundred?

ETTA

You told me when you came home.

CHESTER

No, I said two hundred. I remember 'cause I didn't want to upset you.

ETTA

(beat)

You said five hundred, Ches.  
Finish your sandwich.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-DAY

Chester sits behind the counter reading a newspaper.

Ernie stands a few feet away from him, his arms folded over his chest. An awkward silences fills the store, broken only by the sound of Chester turning the pages.

CHESTER

You do know this fella only shows up at night?

Ernie nods. Chester shrugs and continues to read the paper.



CHESTER (cont'd)  
I guess I kinda figured you'd be  
conducting your surveillance in a  
more discreet fashion.

ERNIE  
Did you?

CHESTER  
Yes.

ERNIE  
And I guess I kinda thought you  
might be a little more grateful.

CHESTER  
I am.

ERNIE  
You don't sound it.

A CUSTOMER walks in, setting off a buzzer. Ernie whips  
around to stare at him. The customer hesitates before  
walking to the refrigerator, grabbing a twelve pack of beer  
and taking it to the counter.

Ernie follows his every move like a hawk.

ERNIE (cont'd)  
That'll be \$9.70.

The customer hands him a twenty.

ERNIE (cont'd)  
(to customer)  
You over 21?

CUSTOMER  
I'm 46.

ERNIE  
Carry on.

Chester glares at Ernie as he hands the customer his change.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER-DAY

Jimmy and Randy sit in a booth.

JIMMY

I can't believe you painted that bathroom without ever asking me what I thought.

RANDY

I wanted a frickin' blue bathroom, okay? No wallpaper. None of that crap. Just a blue bathroom like regular people have.

Two booths away, Chester and Kyle eat lunch.

KYLE

Who's minding the store?

CHESTER

Ernie.

KYLE

Think that's wise?

CHESTER

Not really. A man's got to eat, though.

CUT TO:

LIQUOR STORE-DAY

Ernie stands behind the counter. A MAN walks through the front door, setting off the buzzer.

ERNIE

(accusatory)

Can I help you?

MAN

Just getting some beer.

ERNIE

Why?

MAN

Why am I getting beer?

ERNIE

You heard me.

MAN

Same reason everyone else does, I suppose.

The man removes a six-pack from the refrigerator.

ERNIE  
You're not from around here.

MAN  
Does that matter?

ERNIE  
I'll ask the questions.

MAN  
Is it always this tough to buy a  
beer around these parts?

ERNIE  
You tell me.

The man puts the beer back in the refrigerator.

MAN  
Forget it.

The man starts to walk out the door.

ERNIE  
Get back here.

The man stops at the door.

MAN  
What?

ERNIE  
I said get back here.

The man walks back to the counter.

ERNIE (cont'd)  
You wanted beer, get your beer.

MAN  
I wanted beer until you turned out  
to be a total whack job, now I want  
to leave.

Ernie walks over to the refrigerator, retrieves the six pack,  
places it on the counter and rings it up.

ERNIE  
That'll be \$4.69.

MAN  
You can't make me buy that.

Ernie pulls his badge from his pocket and slams it on the counter.

The man looks at it.

MAN (cont'd)  
So?

ERNIE  
\$4.69.

He puts the six-pack in a paper bag.

MAN  
I don't want it.

ERNIE  
\$4.69.

MAN  
No.

CUT TO:

INT. DINER-DAY

Kyle and Chester eat their lunch.

KYLE  
How about a guard dog?

CHESTER  
Hadn't thought about it?

KYLE  
I got a friend who's a breeder over in Mason. I helped build the kennel, so he owes me one.

CHESTER  
Let me think it over.

KYLE  
No hurry.

Pam, the waitress, walks over.

KYLE (cont'd)  
Hey, beautiful.

She straddles Kyle.

PAM  
Can I get you anything for dessert?

She gives him a long, deep kiss.

KYLE  
That depends, what do you have?

PAM  
Warm apple pie.

She kisses his cheek.

PAM (cont'd)  
Chocolate cake.

She kisses his neck.

PAM (cont'd)  
Fruit cup.

She kisses his chest.

CHESTER O.S.  
For the love of God, get the fruit  
cup, Kyle.

Pam's eyes never leave Kyle.

PAM  
He doesn't have to get the fruit  
cup, Ches.

She kisses his stomach.

PAM (cont'd)  
Sherbert.

Kyle grabs her by the shoulders and lifts her up.

KYLE  
I better have the sherbert.

PAM  
You're sure?

KYLE  
Yeah.

She stands up and smooths out her apron.

CHESTER  
You must make a killing in tips.

PAM  
Shut up, Ches. Usual?

CHESTER  
Please.

She walks away.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
(to Kyle)  
Just so you know, Etta's decided  
she doesn't want you visiting The  
Shangri-la anymore.

KYLE  
(laughs)  
Etta's decided?

CHESTER  
I don't know why you're laughing.

KYLE  
No offense, Ches, but where does  
she get off telling me what I can  
and can't do?

CHESTER  
Etta gets off telling anybody,  
anything. You know that as well as  
I do.

KYLE  
You, my friend, are whipped.

CHESTER  
I'm realistic. This isn't a battle  
you can win.

KYLE  
I'll take my chances, thank you  
very much.

CHESTER  
Suit yourself.

CUT TO:

## EXT. LIQUOR STORE-DAY

Chester walks down the street toward the liquor store. He sees the customer Ernie harassed walking out the door with a small package under his arm. The man turns back toward the door and raises his middle finger in defiance and then starts running down the street. Moments later Ernie bursts out the door and races after him.

CUT TO:

## EXT. DOG BREEDER'S HOUSE-DAY

A dilapidated one story house with half the paint chipped off. A CHORUS OF BARKING DOGS fills the air from a makeshift kennel in the backyard.

JESSE, the Dog Breeder, stands with his hands jammed in his pockets. His eyes are bloodshot, his hands shake.

JESSE

You need to know one thing; all sales are final. Don't worry, none of the dogs are broken or nothing, but I'm getting out of this business and the last thing I need is people bringing one of 'em back on me.

KYLE

Why are you getting out of it?

JESSE

'Cause I haven't slept in two years. 'Cause every time one of them barks, they all gotta bark, and when you have 20 of 'em, one of 'em always finds a reason to bark. You read Poe?

CHESTER

I'm sorry?

JESSE

Edgar Allen Poe. You every read his stuff?

CHESTER

In school.

JESSE

The Tell Tale Heart, you know that one? Fella kills someone and buries him under his floorboards and the sound of the dead fellas heart drives the fella who kilt him crazy.

CHESTER

Yeah.

JESSE

Well, I could deal with that. I really could. That would be a walk in the fucking park compared to this. Do you know I've spent the last three months sleeping in a tent a mile down the road?

CHESTER

I didn't know that.

JESSE

Can't even sleep in my own house. That's not right. Dead fella under your floorboards with his heart pounding, you buy earplugs. Big deal.

CHESTER

Right.

JESSE

It would start to stink, though. Story doesn't mention that.

Awkward silence.

CHESTER

No, I don't think it does.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN-DAY

Etta and Pam sit at the table. Etta combs Shane's hair as he stands in front of her.

SHANE

Can I get an earring?



ETTA  
Can you get a what?

SHANE  
Doug's mom let him get an earring.

ETTA  
Why would you want an earring?  
Girls wear earrings.

SHANE  
Doug's not a girl and he has one.

ETTA  
I'll tell you what, when you're 30,  
if you still want an earring you  
can get one, how's that?

SHANE  
30? That's forever.

ETTA  
I'm almost 30, darling. Do I look  
like forever to you?

Shane says nothing.

ETTA (cont'd)  
The proper answer is no, honey.  
When a woman talks about her age  
she's looking for a compliment.

SHANE  
I don't know what 30 looks like.

ETTA  
Men never do. You all know 20  
pretty good, but 30, that's a  
mystery. You can go over to Doug's  
now, but if his mother comes at you  
with an earring I want you to run  
like hell, you hear?

SHANE  
Heck.

ETTA  
Right. Heck.

She kisses him on the forehead and he leaves.

ETTA (cont'd)

(to Pam)

I need to tell you something. It's been eating me up inside and you're the only person I can trust.

PAM

What is it, Etta?

ETTA

I'm going to hell.

PAM

You cheated on Chester?

ETTA

I could never do that. I would never do anything to hurt him, you know that.

PAM

What then?

ETTA

I'm the person who's been robbing him.

PAM

I know.

ETTA

What?

PAM

Well, I didn't know, but I was starting to suspect.

ETTA

How?

PAM

Well, you've been fancying up the house the last year or so and you don't have your own money, 'cause you stopped working when Shane was born. Chester, God bless him, can't save a dime. If he's not losing at his weekly game of poker, he's destroying some company by investing in it. You told me yourself he invested in three local businesses last year.

ETTA

They all went belly up within six months.

PAM

Just like death walking in the door. So knowing all that I was wondering how you got all this nice furniture and Kyle mentioned that Chester had told him your relatives have been dropping like flies. Only thing is, that makes them my relatives, too, and I've never even heard of them. You're making up dead folks aren't you?

Etta nods.

ETTA

Just so you know, the new table is from Uncle Jeffrey. He had cancer.

Pam retrieves a pen from her purse.

PAM

Jeffrey. Cancer. Got it. What'd he look like?

ETTA

Hell, I don't know. Let's make him fat. The chair was our cousin, Benny.

Pam jots down the name.

PAM

Benny. How'd he die?

ETTA

Plague.

PAM

Plague?

ETTA

I panicked. I was gonna say he drowned, but then I remembered that Dominic drowned. Somebody in this family has to know how to swim.

PAM

Bureau in the bedroom?

ETTA  
(shaking head)  
That's our family friend, Anna.  
Dominic is the antique clock.

Pam continues writing.

PAM  
Do you have a floor plan or  
something?

ETTA  
Just those four things, so far.

PAM  
So far? Etta, you can't be  
thinking of doing this again?

ETTA  
I don't know what to do. This last  
one really shook Chester up. He's  
always been so calm, I figured it  
wouldn't hurt him. I was only  
doing it sock away money that I  
knew he'd end up fritting away if I  
didn't get it.

PAM  
You see this as a Robin Hood thing?

ETTA  
Precisely.

PAM  
But all you're doing is buying  
stuff you like.

ETTA  
Investments. When it's time for  
Shane to head off to college, we  
can sell the furniture. Our old  
furniture's in the basement. I got  
this friend from college whose  
husband is an antique dealer and I  
sent him pictures of all these  
things and he assures me they're  
all worth substantially more than I  
paid.

Through the kitchen window we see Chester pull the station  
wagon into the driveway. He and Kyle scramble out of the car  
and slam the doors.

They stand 10 feet from the car, staring at the DOG which is still inside the car and barking ferociously.

Chester starts to walk toward the car, but the barking increases and he quickly backs away.

Etta and Pam hear the ruckus and walk to the back door.

CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE-DAY

Etta and Pam stand in the kitchen doorway watching Chester and Kyle.

ETTA

Honey, why you got a wolf in the car?

CHESTER

It's not a wolf. It's a guard dog.

ETTA

We saw something just like that at Yellowstone and you called it a wolf.

CHESTER

Wolves are related to dogs. Some dogs look a little like a wolf.

ETTA

That looks exactly like a wolf. You're not thinking of bringing that thing inside?

CHESTER

No. But I was hoping to get him out of the car. I think our little robber friend will be in for a pretty big surprise next time he shows up.

ETTA

You're going to keep that at the store?

CHESTER

(beaming)

Yep.

ETTA  
So you think he'll eat the robber  
before he eats you.

CHESTER  
The fella who sold it to me gave me  
a booklet with all the commands.

ETTA  
Can I see it?

CHESTER  
It's in the car.

KYLE  
That was me. Sorry.

CHESTER  
I figure a couple of days in the  
car, no food, he'll wind down.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKET-NIGHT

Etta pushes a cart down the aisle. Chris sits in the cart.  
Shane walks alongside.

She hands her marketing list to Shane.

ETTA  
What does that say?

SHANE  
Bread.

ETTA  
Actually it says beans, but you  
were awful close. And we do need  
bread. How'd you know that?

Shane smiles.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Why don't you go get momma a loaf  
of bread.

SHANE  
White bread?

ETTA

No, real bread, Shane darling.  
Don't get the kind you can ball up  
in your fist and it snaps back to  
its original shape. That stuff is  
full of chemicals.

SHANE

What are chemicals?

ETTA

You know that janitor at your  
school? The one who spends every  
day washing the same windows.

SHANE

Mr. Perkins?

ETTA

Yeah. He's full of chemicals, too.

SHANE

Oh.

ETTA

Exactly.

SHANE

Because he eats white bread?

ETTA

Among other things. Now you run  
along.

Shane runs off to get the bread.

CUT TO:

INT. MARKET-LATER

Etta stands at the checkout counter. JERRY SIMMONS, 68,  
rings up her groceries. He slowly draws each item across the  
scanner. His eyes never leave Etta as he does so. His glare  
is disarming, but she ignores it completely.

SHANE

(to Etta)

Why is he looking at you like that?

ETTA

You'd have to ask him that.

SHANE

Why do you look at my mom like that?

JERRY

Your mother is an awful handsome woman.

ETTA

This is just Mr. Simmons way of offering a compliment. Staring like this. You can do that sort of thing when you charge less than all the other markets in the area. Of course, if he didn't charge less, this sort of behavior might be considered inappropriate. Isn't that right, Mr. Simmons?

JERRY

(still staring)

Awful handsome.

CUT TO:

EXT. MARKET-NIGHT

Etta and Shane walk toward the car in the parking lot. Jerry pushes her shopping cart a few steps behind, his eyes never leaving Etta. Distracted, he slams the cart into a parked car. Etta turns to look.

ETTA

Maybe you should leave a note.

JERRY

Whatever you say, Etta.

Across the street Shane exits his truck and walks into the Shangri-la with two friends. Shane spots him.

SHANE

Look, it's uncle Kyle.

JERRY

I didn't know your sister got married?

ETTA

She didn't. She figures if the kids start calling him that maybe he'll finally take the hint.



SHANE  
(yelling)  
Uncle Ky...

Etta puts her hand over Shane's mouth.

ETTA  
There's no need to bother Uncle  
Kyle when he's doing something he  
knows he shouldn't be doing.

JERRY  
Ah, there's nothing wrong with a  
little harmless fun.

ETTA  
I'm molding a young man here, Mr.  
Simmons. Please do not contradict  
me mid-mold.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN-NIGHT

Etta and Pam put away the groceries.

PAM  
Must be nice to get all your  
groceries half-price just because a  
filthy old man thinks you're  
pretty.

ETTA  
Not pretty. Awful handsome. I  
think that's better than pretty.  
Anyway, a little fantasizing never  
hurt anybody and it certainly helps  
where the little fellas are  
involved.

She removes a coffee tin from a cupboard and places a twenty  
dollar bill inside.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Another college textbook for Shane.

PAM  
I wish you'd keep that in a bank.

ETTA

You know, you weren't old enough at the time to appreciate it, but when that Savings and Loan went under, mom and dad only got back pennies on the dollar. Doesn't make sense to have someone else messing with your money.

PAM

And what if you were robbed?

ETTA

I'm the only crime in town and all I do is rob Peter to pay Paul. That's a crime in name only. Anyway, people in this town know better than to cross me.

PAM

There's a Paul Newman movie on in 20 minutes, you mind if I watch it here?

ETTA

I don't think that's a healthy obsession. The man's 75 years old.

PAM

Not in this movie he's not. Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid.

ETTA

Robert Redford?

PAM

Uh-huh.

ETTA

I'll make the popcorn.

PAM

And why is it okay for you to have a crush and not me.

ETTA

Because I got a ring, and that means something. Robert is nothing but a diversion for me on those nights Chester works late. You're single.

ETTA(cont'd)

You start obsessing about a man,  
and how am I to know you won't show  
up on his doorstep one day wearing  
nothing but a bow?

PAM

I might not have the ring yet, but  
I got someone, too. Just so  
happens he's at the movies tonight.

ETTA

Kyle's at the movies?

PAM

He is.

ETTA

He told you that?

PAM

Of course, silly. Why?

ETTA

No reason.

(beat)

You know, I left something at the  
store. Could you make the popcorn?  
I won't be long.

CUT TO:

EXT. SHANGRI-LA-NIGHT

Etta pulls her car into the Shangri-la parking lot. She  
leaves the lights on and engine running and walks toward  
Kyle's truck.

She removes a pocket knife from her purse and stabs Kyle's  
front left tire. As it deflates, she walks to his back left  
tire and stabs it, as well.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR-NIGHT

Buck and Rob drive past the parking lot as Etta stabs the  
Kyle's tires. They only see her from behind.

BUCK

What the hell?

They turn on the siren and pull into the parking lot. Buck steps out of the car.

BUCK (cont'd)  
(to Etta)  
Now, just what in the hell do you think you're doing?

Etta turns to look at him. Buck stiffens.

BUCK (cont'd)  
Oh hello, Etta, didn't know it was you.

ETTA  
Can't talk, Buck. Busy.

She turns back to the tire.

BUCK  
We'll talk later.

Buck climbs back into the patrol car.

ROB  
You're just gonna let her keep doing that?

BUCK  
That's Etta Milford. When you've lived here a little while longer, you'll understand.

ROB  
Understand what?

BUCK  
That she is a very determined individual.

ROB  
Shit, you're scared of her.

BUCK  
Not scared. Respectful. There's just some people in this life you want to stay on the right side of and Etta's all of 'em. If she's slashing someone's tire, she's got a reason and that's good enough for me.

Etta drives out of the parking lot. As she passes the patrol car she honks and waves.

CUT TO:

EXT. GAS STATION-DAY

Etta fills her gas tank. A few yards away a MECHANIC changes the flat tires on Kyle's truck. Kyle stands a few feet from the truck.

Etta returns the nozzle to the pump and walks over to Kyle.

ETTA

Howdy.

Kyle looks at his boots as he talks.

KYLE

Those tires barely had a thousand miles on them. Damn near brand new.

ETTA

And they're the big ones, too.

KYLE

Yep.

ETTA

How was the movie?

Flustered, Kyle starts to light a cigarette.

MECHANIC O.S.

You're in a gas station, asshole.

Kyle immediately jabs the cigarette out on his truck.

KYLE

(To Mechanic)

Sorry.

(To Etta)

What gives you the right?

ETTA

I don't know what you're talking about.

KYLE

I don't make much. This truck and your sister are the only two things I got worth a damn in this world. And now the money I was gonna spend on her I got to spend on this. Did that ever even occur to you?

ETTA

Do you really think it's the money she cares about?

KYLE

Have you checked the price of engagement rings recently?

ETTA

She just wants to know that you care enough about her not to do things you know would hurt her. Hell, she wouldn't care if you gave her a ring made out of wax.

KYLE

But I do, Etta. I do.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-DAY

Chester sits behind the counter. The guard dog is leashed to a poll ten feet from the counter. A CUSTOMER walks in. The dog barks ferociously and lunges at the customer. The customers hesitates.

Chester points at a YELLOW DOTTED TAPE LINE on the floor.

CHESTER

All you gotta do is follow that line and he can't reach you.

CUSTOMER

You're sure?

CHESTER

I do it every day.

The customer walks along the yellow line. The guard dog lunges at him, coming up a foot short.

CUSTOMER

How's business?

CHESTER  
It's been better.

CUSTOMER  
Can't imagine why?

CHESTER  
People are getting used to him.  
He's a lot better than he was.

The customer places a bottle of wine on the counter. The dog continues to bark and lunge.

CUSTOMER  
He got a name?

CHESTER  
I've just taken to calling him shut  
the fuck up. Try it.

CUSTOMER  
(to dog)  
Shut the fuck up.

CHESTER  
Kinda therapeutic, isn't it?

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD-DAY

Shane stands at the plate in a Little League Baseball game. Chester leans against a chain link fence along the first base line watching him.

CHESTER  
Come on, Shane, what do you say?

Shane swings and misses at a pitch.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
No worries, no worries, buddy.

Jimmy walks up and stands next to Chester.

JIMMY  
How's DiMaggio doin'?

CHESTER  
Poor little guy inherited his  
father's talent.

The pitcher blows another pitch past Shane.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Don't worry none, buddy. Not your  
pitch, not your pitch.

The pitcher throws again. Shane hits a weak pop up that the first baseman handles easily for an out.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Attaway, buddy.

Shane sports an ear to ear grin as he jogs back to the dugout. He looks over at Chester who gives him a thumbs up. It's the third out of the inning. A teammate takes Shane's helmet and hands him his glove. He jogs out to second base.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
That's my boy.

JIMMY  
Must be nice.

CHESTER  
What's that?

JIMMY  
Kids.

CHESTER  
Well, let's see. He tried to set  
his bed on a fire a couple months  
back, so he wouldn't have to make  
it anymore, and I still can't find  
that Troy Aikman autographed  
football Etta gave me for Christmas  
last year, but all things  
considered it is nice.

He notices Jimmy's distant look.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Hell Jimmy, you're young. It'll  
happen for you. Right woman just  
hasn't come along yet, that's all.  
I mean if I can find someone like  
Etta...

JIMMY  
She's a good woman.



CHESTER  
Yes, she is. She'd do anything for  
that boy out there.

The batter hits a ground ball to Shane at second base. Shane fields it cleanly and throws the ball so far over the first baseman's head that it clears the chain link fence Chester is leaning against and rolls toward the parking lot. Chester turns to watch it.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Boy, he has a strong arm. Didn't  
get that from me.

CUT TO:

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD PARKING LOT-DAY

The other children and parents climb into their cars. Chester stands on the adjacent grass throwing ground balls to Shane.

CHESTER  
You sure you don't want that  
cheeseburger?

SHANE  
Just a few more.

Jimmy stops his truck a few feet away.

JIMMY  
Say Ches, any chance of you coming  
by the house to help me move a  
couple things? Won't take but five  
minutes.

CHESTER  
Hour from now work?

JIMMY  
Perfect.

CUT TO:

EXT. JIMMY'S HOUSE-DAY

Chester heads up the walkway to the front door. An odd combination of gun memorabilia and flowers adorn the front. He rings the doorbell.

CUT TO:

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE-DAY

Jimmy opens the door. Chester steps in. The living room is immaculate. Antique furniture, chintz and flowers everywhere.

CHESTER  
This is very nice.

JIMMY  
(resigned)  
If you like this sort of thing.  
You ever get along real well with  
somebody, but think their taste in  
everything sucks?

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT-DAY

A 6 foot tall wooden crate sits on the floor. Jimmy taps it proudly.

JIMMY  
We just need to carry this out  
back.

CHESTER  
What is it?

JIMMY  
Life-sized statue of Charlton  
Heston. Moses himself. If the  
Jews had had guns it wouldn't have  
taken them 40 years to get out of  
Egypt, I'll tell you that.

Chester peers over at a WORKBENCH in the corner. A table sits on it. Various cans of chemicals are scattered about.

CHESTER  
I didn't know you made furniture?

JIMMY  
I don't. That would be Randy.

CHESTER  
The antique store?

JIMMY  
One and the same.

CHESTER  
What's with all the chemicals?

JIMMY  
You'll have ask him that.

CHESTER  
He doesn't...

Jimmy raises his eyebrows.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Really?

JIMMY  
Can't say as I think it's right,  
but the way he sees it people are  
more interested in having something  
beautiful than something old. This  
is between you and me.

CHESTER  
Of course. Randy. Who would have  
thought it?

CUT TO:

EXT. JIMMY'S HOUSE-DAY

Jimmy and Chester stand in the backyard staring at the  
STATUE. The statue depicts Charlton Heston looking defiant  
in his Planet of the Apes outfit with a slingshot in his  
hand.

JIMMY  
This isn't Moses.

CHESTER  
No. Planet of the Apes, I think.

Jimmy gazes despondently around the garden.

JIMMY

This doesn't go with the garden at all. I was going to have a couple ponds put in. Make it look like he was partin' the Red Sea. Now that's all shot to shit.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK-DAY

A TOWN BARBECUE. Ernie, Chester, Etta, their kids, Pam, Kyle, Randy and Jimmy are all present.

Etta and Pam sit on a blanket eating barbecue chicken. The kids play with a ball a few yards away.

ETTA

I think it's imminent.

PAM

Is there something you know that you aren't telling me?

ETTA

No, it's just a feeling I got. But you know my feelings. I should have been a swami or something. Get myself one of those 1-900 fortune telling lines.

Etta rubs her hands over an imaginary crystal ball.

ETTA (cont'd)

The man of your dreams will propose to you very soon.

PAM

This reading is a freebie, right?

ETTA

Would I charge my little sister?

PAM

He sure does take his sweet time, I'll say that much.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK-LATER

Randy leans against a tree talking to Ernie. Randy's voice is not thin and affected as it was at the antique store, but deep and forceful. He glances over at Jimmy.

RANDY

Will you look at him? Always with the guns and guy stuff. Mr. Macho. I'll tell you one thing, around the house he's a total queen. Makes people believe I'm the one who's covering everything in chintz and lace.

ERNIE

You're not?

RANDY

Hell no. Somebody has to be the man in the relationship.

ERNIE

Your voice is different today. You got a cold or something?

RANDY

Naw. Tell me, would you buy an antique from a fella who sounds like this?

ERNIE

I wouldn't buy an antique in the first place.

RANDY

You and everybody else in this town. Hey, that fella over there has a portable TV. Time to watch the Cowboys.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK-LATER

Chester sits down next to Etta. Pam plays with the children a few yards away.

CHESTER

Looked like you girls were plotting something.

ETTA  
Some men are little freer than  
others. We need to bring Kyle into  
the corral is all.

CHESTER  
Is that how you talked about me  
when we were dating?

She kisses his cheek.

ETTA  
Ches, you were born in the corral.  
Kyle's got a little more of the  
Arabian in him, he likes to run.

CHESTER  
Arabian?

ETTA  
The horse, not the people.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK-LATER

Randy shouts at the portable television.

RANDY  
That was a clip. Make the damn  
call, ref. Jesus H. Christ.

INTERCUT:

Randy chuckles as he watches Randy.

CHESTER  
I guess some people aren't always  
as they seem.

Etta digs through an ice chest.

ETTA  
What's that, babe?

CHESTER  
You know how you talk about someday  
selling some of that old furniture  
you keep inheriting to help pay for  
the kids' education?

ETTA  
(absentmindedly)  
Uh-huh?

CHESTER  
Well don't ever sell it old Randy.  
He'll rob you blind.

ETTA  
Oh, he's okay.

CHESTER  
Makes his own antiques.

Etta stops rooting around in the cooler.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
That's right, I saw the evidence  
plain as day. I was helping Jimmy  
move one of those Moses statues,  
only it turned out not to be Moses.  
Ruined the garden.

ETTA  
What'd you see?

CHESTER  
Dyes, chemicals, bleach. He was  
working on a table. Probably  
trying to make it look like the one  
you just got from Uncle Whozit.  
Who was it that died again? I  
can't keep 'em all straight.

ETTA  
Oh hell, I don't know. Are you  
sure about this?

CHESTER  
Yeah, babe. But this is between  
you and me. Don't go blabbing it  
around. Jimmy mentioned it in  
confidence.

ETTA  
I won't tell a soul.

CUT TO:

INT. ANTIQUE STORE-NIGHT

Randy sits in his office in the rear of the store going over paperwork. He knocks over a can of Coke on his desk.

RANDY

Dammit.

He walks out of the office toward the bathroom.

Etta stands next to the bathroom, wearing a ski mask, trench coat, and carrying a shotgun.

RANDY (cont'd)

(unfazed)

Evening, Etta.

He disappears into the bathroom, reappears with paper towels and walks back to his office.

Etta appears in the office doorway.

RANDY (cont'd)

You do realize that coat went out  
of style five years ago?

Etta points the shotgun at him. Randy leans back in his chair and spreads his arms apart to make a bigger target.

RANDY (cont'd)

Go ahead. But, get used to the  
fact that you'd never see those  
children of yours again.

ETTA

I want my money back.

RANDY

Already spent it. Anyway, all  
sales are final, you know that.  
Says so right ~~(MORE)~~ the sign outside.

ETTA

They're fakes. How could you cheat  
a woman?

RANDY

You're no woman, Etta. You're a  
polecat. Running roughshod over  
everyone else so you can get what  
you want. Even your husband;  
simple, trusting Chester.



RANDY(cont'd)

He's devoted to you, you know that?  
Jimmy talks about it all the time.  
Now how shall we handle this?

ETTA

You can give me my money back.

He picks up the phone.

RANDY

I could call the police and Ernie  
could head on over and I guess  
you'd get visiting privileges with  
your kids in prison, although I  
don't think Chester would ever want  
to see you again.

He throws his arms out to his sides.

RANDY (cont'd)

Or you could shoot me and you'd get  
your revenge, but you wouldn't get  
any money. And there'd be an  
investigation, and Jimmy would tell  
them about the fake furniture, and  
ultimately they'd make the  
connection that Jimmy told Chester  
and you were my biggest customer.  
Ernie wouldn't make that  
connection, of course, but they'd  
bring somebody in from the state.  
Somebody competent. And you'd  
never see your kids again.

ETTA

You stole from me. You stole from  
my kids.

RANDY

It does occur to me that there is a  
third option. Take off the mask.

Etta hesitates.

RANDY (cont'd)

Take off the fucking mask.

She removes the ski mask.

RANDY (cont'd)

Better. I like to see who I'm  
talking to.

He walks over and takes her shotgun.

RANDY (cont'd)  
You see, you're not the only person  
in this town who likes a little bit  
of control.

He opens a back door and motions his head.

RANDY (cont'd)  
Let's go.

CUT TO:

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Randy stands by the mantle. Etta sits rigid on the sofa.

RANDY  
Look at this. It's like living in  
a goddamn gingerbread house.

ETTA  
You have nice things. I would  
think you'd be grateful.

RANDY  
It's all Jimmy's. The store is  
Jimmy's.

He deliberately knocks a figurine off the mantle with his  
finger. It crashes to the floor.

RANDY (cont'd)  
Some men never come to terms with  
who they really are. Jimmy's like  
that. So he let's me live here for  
free and pays me to run his shop  
and all I ever have to do is  
pretend that maybe someday I'll  
care for him. It'll never happen.  
Thought of being with him makes me  
sick. You, you're the same way.  
You never came to terms with who  
you really are. All your grandiose  
dreams about nice things. But  
you're trash.

ETTA  
I am not trash.

RANDY  
You're pretty trash, though. Is  
that your natural hair color?

ETTA  
I am not trash.

RANDY  
Suit yourself. I do think we need  
to come to some sort of  
arrangement.

He moves toward the sofa. She stands up and backs away.

RANDY (cont'd)  
Nothing permanent. Just a for the  
time being sort of thing.

ETTA  
Never.

RANDY  
That's an awful long time. You're  
smart. You know that's not the  
right answer.

The front door opens. Jimmy walks in.

RANDY (cont'd)  
(to Jimmy)  
I thought you were at the movies?

JIMMY  
(to Randy)  
Projectionist got drunk again.  
Locked himself in the booth and  
wouldn't start the movie.  
(to Etta)  
Hey, didn't expect to see you here.

ETTA  
I...

RANDY  
Turns out Etta's quite an antique  
fan. I was telling her we might be  
able to form some sort of business  
agreement.

Jimmy's face lights up.

JIMMY  
Didn't know anybody in this town  
much cared for them. Excepting  
Randy, of course. Most of the  
business is people passing through.

ETTA

Yes. I should go now. Evening,  
Jimmy.

She walks to the door.

RANDY

Night, Etta. Don't you forget that  
thing we talked about. I'll be in  
touch.

CUT TO:

EXT. LIQUOR STORE-DAY

Chester pulls his car into the parking lot and walks to the liquor store. He has a cup of coffee in his hand and a morning paper wedged under his arm. He arrives at the door and fumbles for his keys.

He opens the front door. We hear frantic barking and then see the dog bursting from the back of the store towards Chester.

CHESTER

Oh, fuck.

Chester, still standing outside, slams the door shut. The dog bursts through the window, shattering it, and disappears down the street.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-DAY

A GLASS REPAIRMAN chips away the glass still attached to the door.

A SECOND GLASS REPAIRMAN stands on the counter, installing bullet-proof glass around the counter.

A CUSTOMER stands at the counter buying a bottle of whiskey.

CUSTOMER

I'll tell you one thing, I'm not  
going to miss that dog one bit.  
It's enough to drive a man to not  
drink.

CHESTER

I certainly wouldn't want that.

Eddie tries to hand him a twenty, but the glass repairman drops a piece of bullet-proof glass right in front of him and begins securing it in place. There is no opening in the glass for Chester to interact with customers.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
(to glass installer)  
Isn't there supposed to be a hole  
or something?

CUT TO:

EXT. DINER-NIGHT

Closing time. Pam turns out the light and locks the door behind her. She turns the corner to find Kyle leaning against his truck, his hands shoved in his pockets.

PAM  
(surprised)  
Hey!

KYLE  
Hey, Pam.

PAM  
This is a nice surprise. I thought  
you were going to bed early this  
week on account of that work site  
way over in Barton.

KYLE  
I was thinking we could take a  
drive.

PAM  
Sure.

INT. TRUCK-NIGHT

Kyle drives, lost deep in thought. Pam can barely stifle her excitement.

PAM  
Where we goin' to?

KYLE  
You know me, when I got something  
on my mind I just gotta drive.

PAM  
What you got on your mind?

KYLE  
I'm getting there.

Pam cranes her head out the window to look at the stars.

PAM  
Well, you certainly picked a  
beautiful night.

CUT TO:

INT. ETTA'S KITCHEN-DAY

Etta scoops ice cream into a bowl for Shane.

ETTA  
What'd you learn in school today?

SHANE  
Nothing.

ETTA  
I thought we agreed you weren't  
going to say that? We pay taxes  
for that school.

SHANE  
What are taxes?

ETTA  
Government's way of keeping you  
humble. Now what'd you learn?

SHANE  
We're learning cursive. I don't  
like it, the "s" looks funny.

ETTA  
I don't think I learned cursive  
until I was much older than you.

She hands him the bowl of ice cream. There is folded laundry on every chair except the nice, supposedly antique chair. He puts the bowl on the table and starts to move laundry off one of the common chairs onto the table.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Don't put your grimy little hands  
on my fresh laundry, there's an  
open chair right there.

She motions her head toward the fake antique chair.

SHANE  
But that's the good chair.

ETTA  
A chair's a chair. Give it a try,  
I know you've always wanted to.

The doorbell rings. She walks out of the kitchen toward the front door.

ETTA (cont'd)  
(to herself)  
Been seeing your cute little butt  
prints on it for months, anyway.

She opens the front door. Pam stands on the front stoop, fighting back tears. She steps forward, hugs Etta, and bursts into tears.

PAM  
It's over, Etta. He ended it.

CUT TO:

INT. ETTA'S HOUSE-NIGHT

Etta sits on the sofa, her arms crossed, staring absentmindedly at the hall table she recently bought. The television is on. She ignores it.

Chester walks in.

CHESTER  
Hey.

He instinctively tosses his keys on the table.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Whoa, I'm sorry.

He quickly picks up the keys and rubs his hand on the table.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
No dents. Gotta remember we no  
longer got that Wal-Mart special.

ETTA  
(subdued)  
That's okay.

CHESTER  
Sure is nice. I guess good taste  
runs in your family. What're you  
watching?

ETTA  
News.

Chester glances at the TV. A movie is on.

CHESTER  
You okay?

ETTA  
I'm so tired, Ches. Awfully tired.

He sits on the sofa next to her.

CHESTER  
Well then go to bed, silly. You  
didn't have to wait up for me.

ETTA  
Not that kinda tired.

CHESTER  
I didn't know there was more than  
one kind.

ETTA  
Why do you love me?

CHESTER  
What?

ETTA  
Why do you love me?

CHESTER  
I never think about why. I just  
do.

ETTA  
Well, think about why. Because I  
can't think of any good reason  
right now why you should.

CHESTER  
What's going on?



ETTA  
Everything, Chester, everything is  
going on.

She walks to a door in the hallway.

ETTA (cont'd)  
Come on.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT-NIGHT

Etta pushes a ceiling panel back and removes the shotgun and places it on the workbench.

CHESTER  
Since when do you have a gun?

Etta reaches up behind the panel and removes the trench coat and drops it on the workbench.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
No, Etta.

She reaches up and removes the ski mask and tosses it to Chester. He let's it hit his chest and fall to the floor.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
I don't understand.

ETTA  
I'm so sorry.

CHESTER  
You?

She nods.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
I thought you loved me?

ETTA  
I do love you. You'll never know  
how much I love you.

CHESTER  
And you put me through this? Make  
me think I'm going to die? Always  
looking over my shoulder at work.  
And you stole from us.

ETTA  
I stole for us.

CHESTER  
There's no such thing. Wait...the  
antiques. That goddamn antique  
furniture. You didn't?

She nods.

Chester storms up the basement steps. Etta runs after him.

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY-LATER

Chester emerges from the basement door and grabs the mahogany table. He throws it against the wall. His keys fly across the room. The table lamp falls to the floor. The light bulb shatters.

He turns to Etta, still standing in the doorway.

CHESTER  
You stole for us? Now you stole  
from us. I loved you so much.

ETTA  
Love...so much.

CHESTER  
Don't correct me.

He grabs his keys off the floor and opens the front door.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
You always wanted nice things. Now  
you have nice things.  
Congratulations.

He leaves, slamming the door behind him. Etta falls to the floor, crying.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-DAY

Chester stocks the shelves behind the counter. Etta enters.

He opens the register.

CHESTER  
How much do you want?

ETTA  
(subdued)  
Stop it.

He pulls a wad of twenties out.

CHESTER  
Will a hundred be enough? Two  
hundred?

ETTA  
Don't you want to know why I told  
you?

CHESTER  
No Etta, I don't want to know. I  
spoke to an attorney this morning.  
I know better than to seek full  
custody. And I won't tell them  
what you did. That can be our  
awful little secret.

ETTA  
It isn't our awful little secret.

CHESTER  
Good. Now I can be the town  
laughingstock, too.

ETTA  
Pam figured it out.

CHESTER  
So Kyle knows.

ETTA  
She swore she wouldn't tell. I  
believe her(MORE)

The glass installer walks into the store. Chester sweeps his  
hand toward the bullet proof glass partition

CHESTER  
Seems I won't be needing this  
little monstrosity anymore. Unless  
you're planning another caper, just  
for old times sake.  
(to Glass Installer)  
I'll be in the storeroom.

CHESTER(cont'd)  
If anybody comes in, give me a  
holler.

CUT TO:

EXT. STRIP CLUB-NIGHT

Kyle exits the Shangri-la with an OLDER MAN. They shake hands and part ways. Kyle walks to his pickup truck in the parking lot.

CUT TO:

INT. TRUCK-NIGHT

Kyle gets into his truck and starts the engine. He glances to his right. Etta sits in the passenger seat.

KYLE  
(calm)  
You know, usually when you get into your truck late at night and there's someone uninvited sitting in the passenger seat, it freaks you out. But you, I knew you'd be here. What horrible punishment do you have planned for me? What ever it is, do it me, because I can't afford to fix the truck.

Etta starts to talk, but can't find the words.

KYLE (cont'd)  
I love your sister.

ETTA  
I know.

KYLE  
I love her something scary.

ETTA  
I know.

KYLE  
But you forced my hand. I've already been a kid once, Etta. I can't always be having you telling me what I can and can't do. It ain't right.

ETTA

I'm sorry.

KYLE

I never heard you say that before.

ETTA

I never felt that way until recently. But every day now it seems I have more and more to be sorry about.

KYLE

You're here to tell me to take Pam back?

ETTA

No, I'm done telling people what to do. I'm here to tell you that she loves you, she misses you, and I'm going to stay the hell out of your life.

She motions her head toward the strip club.

ETTA (cont'd)

You can grow roots in that place, as far as I'm concerned.

KYLE

You know, to tell you the truth, I'm not much on strip clubs myself. I mean, the view is nice and everything, but I always end up thinking about Pam.

ETTA

That's sweet, but you don't have to try and make me happy.

KYLE

I'm not. Trust me, making you happy is the last thing I want to do right now. My boss likes to go and there's plenty of cheap labor round here. Can't swing a dead cat in this county without hitting someone who can swing a hammer or saw wood. So when he says let's go to club, I go to the club. You're not going to pop his tires are you?

ETTA  
Of course not.

KYLE  
It's gonna seem kinda weird around  
here without you calling all the  
shots.

ETTA  
Oh, I'm not done quite yet. Still  
have a few loose ends. But I am  
done with you.

CUT TO:

ICE CREAM PARLOR-NIGHT

Ernie eats a sundae at a booth in the corner. Etta enters.

ETTA  
You're still open?

TEENAGER  
Five more minutes.

ETTA  
I'll make it easy for you then;  
pint of Raspberry sherbert. Could  
I use your bathroom?

TEENAGER  
The key's on the wall.

ETTA  
(to Ernie)  
Well, fancy seeing you here.

ERNIE  
You know me and chocolate sundaes.

ETTA  
Buddies 'til the end.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM-NIGHT

Etta pries open the towel dispenser and removes half the  
paper towels and shoves them in the garbage pail.

She removes a TAPE RECORDER from her purse, turns it on, and places it in the towel dispenser. She shuts the dispenser.

CUT TO:

EXT. GOLF DRIVING RANGE-DAY

Ernie hits a bucket of golf balls. All his shots slice dramatically to the right. Etta approaches.

ETTA

What are you shooting these days?

ERNIE

I hit the high eighties pretty regular.

ETTA

Not with that swing, you're not. You could never break a hundred when we used to play.

ERNIE

I let you win.

ETTA

No, you didn't.

ERNIE

Is it true what I heard about you and Chester?

ETTA

We hit a rough stretch. But that's where you're going to help me.

ERNIE

You and I meant something to each other at one time. You ever think about that?

ETTA

That was ten years ago. You and I never would have worked out and you know that.

ERNIE

All I know is that you were with me and then one day you were with him. He's a good man and all, but I'm not going to interfere in your spats and all things considered, you shouldn't expect me to.

He turns away from her and tees up a ball. Etta removes the tape recorder from her purse and presses play.

ERNIE'S VOICE ON TAPE

Oh god yes.

TEENAGER'S VOICE

Don't push my head like that. It makes me gag.

ERNIE'S VOICE ON TAPE

Sorry. Please don't stop.

TEENAGER'S VOICE

I want a case of bottles this time.

ERNIE'S VOICE ON TAPE

Whatever. Don't stop.

TEENAGER'S VOICE

You keep buying cans. Cans taste funny.

ERNIE'S VOICE ON TAPE

I'll buy you two cases, if you'll just shut up and finish.

Etta turns off the recorder. Ernie wheels around to see if anybody was in earshot.

ERNIE

Buying alcohol for a minor.  
There's worse things.

ETTA

That's the least of your worries.  
You had her playing tonsil hockey  
with your little fella there.

ERNIE

She's eighteen.

ETTA

Not for two months. I checked.  
You should have, too. That's  
statutory. And she's more than  
willing to make a statement as long  
as I buy her a case of beer. That  
little girl does like her beer.



ERNIE

Can't I ever have anything nice  
without you coming along and  
screwing it up for me?

ETTA

No. But, I do intend to make you a  
hero. You think you can handle  
that?

ERNIE

If you want to make me a hero, than  
why the hell do you feel the need  
to blackmail me first? I swear,  
I'll never understand you.

ETTA

Because it was me that was robbing  
Chester.

ERNIE

What?

ETTA

That's going to be our little  
secret, though.

ERNIE

You robbed your own husband?

ETTA

Only to keep him from throwing our  
money away. That doesn't make it  
right, I know that, now.

ERNIE

You're evil.

ETTA

I'm not evil, Ernie. I sure as  
hell never face fucked a seventeen  
year old, neither. But I can't  
turn over my proverbial leaf until  
you help me here. And if you'd  
keep your right elbow in when you  
swung, you might land the ball in  
the fairway every now and then.

She grabs the golf club from him, tees up a ball, and hits it  
dead straight down the middle of the driving range.

ETTA (cont'd)  
It's only a tough game, if you make  
it tough. Kinda like life.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM-DAY

A seedy motel room. A coin operated television set, and a bed that vibrates for 5 minutes for a quarter.

Etta sits on the edge of the bed reading a magazine. She drops a quarter in the slot to make the bed vibrate and tries to read, but it bounces her around so violently that she stands up.

A knock at the door.

Etta opens the door. Randy steps in, shutting the door behind him.

RANDY  
I'm glad you finally came to your  
senses.

He tries to kiss her. She pulls away.

ETTA  
It's been a while for you, hasn't  
it? You have to talk to a woman  
first.

RANDY  
I'm not here for romance, Etta.  
I'm just here to get what I got  
coming. No need to talk for that.

ETTA  
A woman always needs to talk. I  
need to get a few things right in  
my head before I do this. I've  
never been with a bisexual before.  
I was raised Christian.

RANDY  
Who said anything about bisexual?  
I live with a fag, that's all.  
Doesn't make me one. It's a  
financial arrangement, pure and  
simple.

ETTA  
He's your sugar daddy.

RANDY  
Don't make my skin crawl.

ETTA  
Doesn't sound like Jimmy to let you  
cheat people the way you do.

RANDY  
Jimmy doesn't let me do anything.  
What ever I make is mine to do with  
as I please.

He walks to the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM-DAY

Randy urinates with the door open. Behind him is a shower  
with the curtains drawn.

RANDY  
You are right, it has been a while.  
Always thought you were the only  
woman in this town worth a second  
glance anyway. Never dreamed you'd  
fall in my lap the way you did.

As he speaks a HAND reaches from inside the shower toward his  
head.

CUT TO:

INT. MOTEL ROOM-DAY

Etta sits on the edge of the bed, reading a magazine, and  
ignoring Randy's words from the bathroom.

RANDY O.S.  
You know I think you and I are  
similar people in a lot of ways.  
We don't let the...Jesus Christ!

We hear the sounds of a struggle in the bathroom. We hear  
two punches and the sound of a man dropping to the floor.

Jimmy emerges from the bathroom holding his right fist in his  
left hand.

ETTA  
I'm sorry you had to find out like  
this.

JIMMY  
It's better to hear it from his own  
mouth. Let me know how much I owe  
you for that furniture.

ETTA  
Jimmy, I don't want your money.

JIMMY  
Oh, it ain't my money.

He holds up a ROLEX WATCH.

JIMMY (cont'd)  
This is the only thing the  
sonofabitch had when I met him.  
It's a goddamn Rolex.

Randy appears in the bathroom doorway, his face bloody.  
Ernie holds him by the collar of his shirt. Randy points at  
Etta.

RANDY  
She's the one that's been robbing  
Chester.

ERNIE  
Etta, I don't want you to rob  
Chester no more.

ETTA  
(casual)  
Okay, I won't.

JIMMY  
(incredulous)  
She just admitted to it, for fuck  
sake.

JIMMY (cont'd)  
I didn't hear anything.

ERNIE  
Chester never filed an official  
police report, did he Etta?

ETTA  
He did not.

ERNIE  
Insurance?

ETTA  
He's got fire and liability.  
That's about it.

ERNIE  
Well, I can't build a case. No  
police report, no insurance fraud.  
Sounds like a domestic spat to me.

RANDY  
You can't be this thick.

ERNIE  
No really, I can. With you on the  
other hand, I think we have some  
pretty compelling evidence.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR-NIGHT

A NEWSPAPER

We see only the inside of a newspaper that Buck is reading.  
He turns the pages as quickly as he can.

He lowers the newspaper, revealing Rob pointing the radar gun  
at him.

BUCK  
How'd I do?

ROB  
Six miles an hour.

BUCK  
Six? Wow. Top that hotshot.

He hands the paper to Rob. Rob hands him the radar gun.

Ernie sits in the backseat.

ERNIE  
So this is what you guys do?

ROB  
(defensive)  
Sometimes.

ERNIE  
Can I get in on this?

ROB  
Drop your ante in.

Ernie removes a five dollar bill from his wallet and drops it on the front seat.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-NIGHT

Chester watches a small black and white television behind the counter.

The front door opens. He glances up to see Etta walk in wearing her trench coat, ski mask, and carrying her shotgun.

CHESTER  
(casual)  
Hey, Etta. Be right with you.

He picks up the telephone and dials a number.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Yeah, It's Chester. I'm being robbed.

DISPATCHER O.S.  
I'll get Ernie on it.

CHESTER  
You do that.

He hangs up.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
(to Etta)  
Now what can I do for you?

ETTA  
You're going to listen to me.

CHESTER  
Etta, I am so done listening to you.

He turns back to the television set.

She pumps the shotgun, aims, and blows the television set off the counter.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
Dammit Etta, that was a playoff  
game.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE CAR-NIGHT

Ernie holds the newspaper. Buck holds the radar gun.

ERNIE  
There is no way in hell that was  
only four miles an hour.

Buck shows him the LCD read out.

BUCK  
Read it and weep.

ERNIE  
When was the last time that was  
calibrated?

BUCK  
Two weeks. Got the certificate.

We hear the Police Dispatcher over Ernie's walkie-talkie.

DISPATCHER O.S.  
Ernie, he hit again.

ERNIE  
(into walkie-talkie)  
I'm there.

ROB  
Chester?

Ernie nods. Rob reaches to start the car.

ROB (cont'd)  
Let's do it.

Ernie places his hand on Rob's shoulder.

ERNIE  
No, this one is mine.

ROB  
If he's still in the store, you'll  
need back up.

ERNIE

Buck?

BUCK

(to Rob)

This harkens back to intensity  
thing we discussed earlier. If  
Ernie wants it, Ernie gets it.  
Now, turn the car off.

ROB

What?

Ernie steps out of the car and strolls casually down the  
street.

CUT TO:

INT. LIQUOR STORE-NIGHT

BACK ROOM

Chester sits in the swivel chair, his arms crossed defiantly  
across his chest.

Etta stands a few feet away from him, the shotgun in her  
hand.

ETTA

This is how it's going to work.  
Every time you open your mouth, I'm  
going to shoot something. This  
thing was never loaded before. But  
tonight? Tonight's a different  
story.

CHESTER

It is a different story, because  
now I am going to press charges.

Etta wheels and takes out the small refrigerator with a  
SHOTGUN BLAST. Chester immediately clams up. Silence fills  
the room.

ETTA

Okay now. We're going to play  
Chester, This is Your Life.

She pulls a sheath of photographs from the inside pocket of  
her trench coat.

She hands him a picture.



ETTA (cont'd)

This is you and me on our first date. Pam took that picture when you came to pick me up.

She hands him a second picture.

ETTA (cont'd)

This is you and me on our wedding day. You were so nervous, I didn't think you were going to make it through the ceremony. But you did.

She hands him a third picture.

ETTA (cont'd)

This is you holding Shane the day he was born. First words out of your mouth were that he was going to college, because you could never afford to.

She hands him a fourth picture.

ETTA (cont'd)

This is the chicken farm you invested one thousand dollars in without telling me. Only it turned out, there weren't any chickens, and the fellow you gave the money to, didn't even own the farm.

She hands him a fifth picture.

ETTA (cont'd)

This is the man who convinced you to invest five hundred dollars in his perpetual motion machine. There is no such thing, I checked. That was about the time I decided I needed to take a more direct role in our finances. Two weeks later, I robbed you for the first time.

She pulls a stack of money from her pocket and drops it on the desk.

ETTA (cont'd)

Here is every dime I ever stole for us. Turned out I wasn't any better at investing than you were, but at least I got mine back.

She pulls a picture of Randy from her pocket and hands it to Chester.

ETTA (cont'd)

And here is the only person in this town smart enough to figure out that it was me all along. Only thing is, he wanted me to sleep with him to keep his silence. But I'd rather lose you, and have you hate me for the rest of my life, than know that I crossed you like that.

She hands him the shotgun.

ETTA (cont'd)

I've said all I have to say. You're the most wonderful man I've ever met, Ches, but you're an idiot with money. Funny thing is, turns out I was, too.

She walks out of the back room into the store. Chester follows her.

Ernie stands in the front of the store checking the prices on wine bottles.

ERNIE

I'm sorry, am I interrupting something?

CHESTER

No Ernie, you never do. You're supposed to in your line of work, but you don't. We're closed. Could you please leave?

Ernie picks up a bottle of wine.

ERNIE

Put it on my tab?

CHESTER

The tab you never pay?

ERNIE

Yeah, that one.

Ernie leaves. Etta walks to the front door.

CHESTER  
Hey, where do you think you're  
going?

ETTA  
Pam and Kyle are watching the kids.

CHESTER  
Then there's no hurry, is there?

He disappears into the back room and re-emerges waving the  
pile of cash.

CHESTER (cont'd)  
I think if we put our heads  
together we might be able to find a  
way to actually hold onto this.

ETTA  
(hopeful)  
We?

CHESTER  
We. You and I. Lord knows I'd  
lose it within a month and you'd  
probably run off and spend it on a  
piece of driftwood you thought was  
part of Noah's Ark. But together,  
I think we might do okay. There's  
a company I've been looking into.

ETTA  
(stern)  
Chester.

CHESTER  
A real company. On the Stock  
Exchange and everything. Based  
right here in Texas. Name of  
Enron. Have you heard of it?

ETTA  
No.

CHESTER  
They haven't been around too long,  
but they're doing interesting  
things with energy. Ernie told me  
about them.

ETTA  
Ernie?

CHESTER

Yeah.

She grabs the money from Chester.

ETTA

Can't we just bury it in the  
backyard?

He thinks about it.

CHESTER

We can do that.

FADE OUT.

THE END