

A FORTUNE TO KILL

by

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FADE IN

INT. BANK - MIAMI - DAY

Esmeralda, a wizened old Gypsy, hobbles into the Bank lugging a Boombox, Jazz blasting!

EMPLOYEES and CUSTOMERS turn to the commotion. Esmeralda steps into the Teller Line.

CARLOS, (25), the Security Guard, rushes over.

CARLOS
Damn, lady! Turn that thing down!

ESMERALDA
Can't do that, no no no.

CARLOS
Fine, I'll do it.

He reaches for the Boombox.

ESMERALDA
(shouts)
I told you no!

Carlos jumps back.

CARLOS
Ah, Jesus, what are you, a mental patient? Turn that damn music down.

Carlos grabs the Boombox. Turns up the volume.

CARLOS (CONT'D)
Shit!

Esmeralda tries to yank the Boombox out of his hands.

ESMERALDA
Keep your claws off me!

CARLOS
Let go!

The doors to a nearby OFFICE swing open, revealing Mercy (25), sexy but with a hard edge. She sees the tug of war between Esmeralda and Carlos.

MERCY
You let go!

She slaps Carlos's hand. He releases the Boombox, looks at Mercy, and backs away.

Mercy takes Esmeralda's arm.

MERCY (CONT'D)
Esmeralda, where's Mr. Chang?

Esmeralda shakes a bank statement in Mercy's face.

ESMERALDA
They're liars! Liars!

Mercy snatches the bank statement. Reads it.

MERCY
Don't worry, I'll take care of it.
Can you turn down the volume?

ESMERALDA
(vigorously shakes her
head)
No, no, no.

MERCY
Maybe you should go home, then.
It's annoying people.

ESMERALDA
(surprised)
Living people?

MERCY
Yeah.

ESMERALDA
Huh.

Esmeralda makes for the exit, but turns to give Carlos a last dirty look.

Mercy surveys the Turner Bank lobby. Watches the Employees smirk and sneak meaningful glances.

She sighs, enters the Office, and to the sound of someone clapping inside, shuts the door.

INT. OFFICE - MIAMI - DAY

Donald Turner claps as Mercy enters the Office.

DONALD

I'm impressed, my love. You could have a long career as a bouncer.

MERCY

I'd rather a long career as Mrs. Donald Turner.

DONALD

I can't believe you married me.

MERCY

Neither can your family. Or your friends. Or your employees.

She goes to him and mashes her lips against his. Pulls a handkerchief out of his coat pocket and wipes the smear.

DONALD

Leave it on.

MERCY

To remember me by?

DONALD

No, to piss off my employees.

MERCY

Why? They already hate me.

She goes to the window, which overlooks a PARKING LOT, a CHINESE RESTAURANT and a POLICE STATION.

Donald embraces her.

DONALD

They don't know you well enough to hate you.

MERCY

Oh, thanks.

DONALD

You know what I mean.

Mercy leans into him.

MERCY

I wish you could have lunch with me today.

DONALD

Me too.

MERCY
(with a fake pout)
That merger is more important to
you than I am.

DONALD
I'd say you're neck and neck.

MERCY
How about lip and lip?

They kiss.

DONALD
Mmm, you have the most delicious
lips. I love your lips.

MERCY
How do you feel about tongue?

She sticks out her tongue.

INT. CUBAN VOODOO SHOP - MIAMI - DAY

Mercy unwraps a bloody slab of raw cow's tongue.

Jazz plays in another room.

Mr. Chang (60) hands Mercy a knife.

MR. CHANG
Big and juicy, right?

MERCY
Yeah. Too bad I'm not going to cook
it.

MR. CHANG
Yes, too bad. How many names you
bring?

MERCY
Twenty five.

MR. CHANG
Twenty five! Hoo, good thing we got
big tongue.

MERCY
Is that a lot?

MR. CHANG
Seems a lot. Most people not have
twenty five enemies.

Mercy opens her purse and removes twenty five scraps of
paper. A name is written on each scrap.

MERCY
It's just the employees of the
Bank, and his family, and a few
friends who talk shit about me.

MR. CHANG
What kind of talk shit?

MERCY
The usual talk shit.

Mr. Chang nods and hands Mercy a knife.

MR. CHANG
Give a minute.

He walks over to a beaded doorway. Pokes his head inside.

MR. CHANG (CONT'D)
(shouting over the Jazz)
Esmeralda, you okay?
(pauses)
Okey-dokey.

He returns to Mercy and watches her slice the tongue from tip
to base.

She presses the scraps of paper into the slit.

Mr. Chang hands her a needle and thread.

Mercy sutures the tongue.

MR. CHANG (CONT'D)
Curious, Miss Mercy. You not
Santeria.

MERCY
Nope.

MR. CHANG
But you know Santeria Rituals?

MERCY

Google knows Santeria Rituals. But
I'm from New Orleans, Mr. Chang.
Magic's in my blood.

Mr. Chang re-wraps the sutured tongue & sticks it in a paper bag.

MR. CHANG

This powerful magic, Miss Mercy. If
they lie about you, their tongues
shrivel like old man's penis.

MERCY

They better shrivel, or I swear
I'll rip them out.

MR. CHANG

Tongue or penis?

MERCY

Both.

Mr. Chang covers his mouth and crotch.

MR. CHANG

I never talk bad about you, Miss
Mercy.

MERCY

(laughs)
Never, Mr. Chang. We're friends.

He hands her the package.

MERCY (CONT'D)

Where should I take it?

MR. CHANG

Everglades best bet. Throw tongue
deep deep deep into the swamp. You
know Everglades?

MERCY

Yeah, more or less.

MR. CHANG

Good. Should work.

MERCY

You think?

MR. CHANG
Never know for sure.

MERCY
Yeah, I hate that about Magic. Just to be sure, let me get an Azabache stone.

MR. CHANG
Ah, guarantee to repel envy.

MERCY
Yeah, give me the biggest Azabache stone you got.

Mr. Chang reaches under the counter and hands her a black stone attached to a silver chain.

MERCY (CONT'D)
How much? For everything.

MR. CHANG
No charge. One hand wash two, right?

He opens the door and steps respectfully aside.

MR. CHANG (CONT'D)
Say hello Mr. Turner for me, okay? Tell him thank you.

MERCY
I will.

MR. CHANG
And watch careful - alligators eat you alive.

MERCY
All my life, Mr. Chang.

She fastens the Azabache stone to her Jaguar key chain.

EXT. TAMiami TRAIL - EVERGLADES - DAY

A Jaguar speeds West, then veers off the road to pull into a rest stop.

Mercy gets out with the blood-soaked paper bag. Walks through the parking lot to the edge of the swamp. High heels poke into the mud.

She prepares to toss the tongue, but stops to answer her Cellphone.

MERCY

What is it, Rey? What? No! Oh my God, no!

She lowers the cellphone. Bursts into tears. Glances at the paper bag just as an alligator lunges and rips it from her hand.

It swallows the cow's tongue.

Mercy screams and backs into the swamp. The alligator takes a step toward her. She rips the Azabache Stone off her Jaguar key chain and throws it.

The alligator blinks. Backs off the trail. Disappears into the swamp.

Mercy rushes through the mud, through the parking lot, into her Jaguar. She peels out of the parking lot and speeds toward the city.

She passes a distraught family laying flowers at a Cemetary.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Mercy falls to her knees by the grave, convulsed with tears.

Donald Turner's FAMILY, FRIENDS & Employees observe her with destain.

The RABBI (60's) reads the eulogy.

REY BARRIO (50's), a thin man with an angular, shadowy face, talks through the side of his mouth to FRANK (25).

REY

What a total whore.

FRANK

You sound like you envy her.

REY

Shut up, Frank.

Mercy weeps with total abandon.

A short line of attendees wait their turn to shovel dirt onto the coffin.

FRANK

I think we should ditch the plan.

REY

You ditch the plan, Frank, I'll put you in a ditch.

FRANK

Don't get all Mafia on me, Rey, I'm just thinking...

(he gestures to Mercy)

...with our new boss over there, everything's changed.

REY

Nothing's changed.

FRANK

How can you say that?

REY

I have a plan.

FRANK

You have a new plan?

REY

I have a new and improved plan.

Giggling, a WOMAN (21) shovels dirt onto the coffin.

Mercy snatches the shovel out of her hands.

MERCY

Stop it! You're just doing this because you hate him. You all think it's a joke.

WOMAN

We all think you're a joke.

Mercy raises the shovel, as if to strike her, then tosses it aside, sobbing.

REY

Can you believe that shit?

FRANK

I can't say.

REY

Yeah, right. You did a PEEPING TOM on her.

FRANK

I did, but it was inconclusive.
 Anyway, I knew it was a lost cause
 when she hooked up with the old
 man. I can't compete with his kind
 of money.

REY

You can't compete with my kind of
 money.

Rey takes out a handkerchief. Wipes his neck and forehead.
 Drops it.

Mercy backs away from the grave.

Scans the hostile crowd.

Faints and collapses onto her husband's coffin.

Unaware, the Rabbi drones on.

FRANK

I think we should help her out. Or
 bury her.

REY

You know my vote.

Frank pulls Mercy out of the grave. Drags her to the grass.

FRANK

Mrs. Turner, you okay?

MERCY

(barely audible)
 Oh, Donald.

She throws her arms around Frank and kisses him.

The Rabbi, appalled, stops speaking.

Mercy ends the kiss.

Frank helps her stand.

MERCY (CONT'D)

(in a daze)
 You...you're not Donald.

FRANK

No, I'm not.

MERCY

I shouldn't have kissed you.

FRANK

(touches his lips)

No. But thanks.

(to the crowd)

She thought I was her husband. Said his name right before she kissed me.

Rey takes Mercy's arm.

REY

Mrs. Turner, it would be best if you let me take you home.

Mercy tries to pry her arm away. Rey won't let go.

REY (CONT'D)

It would be best if we don't make a scene right now, Mrs. Turner - for the sake of the merger. You do understand what the merger means, don't you?

Mercy relaxes. Smiles. Nods her head.

MERCY

Yes, Rey. Of course I do. You're right.

Rey releases her.

She shoves him aside and faces the crowd.

MERCY (CONT'D)

You can all go to Hell! When I inherit the Bank I'm going to fire all your sorry asses!

She drags Frank to her Jaguar.

REY

(to the crowd)

She's just upset, that's all. Trust me, your jobs are secure.

Mercy and Frank reach the Jaguar.

MERCY

You had my back, Frank. I won't forget it.

Rey catches up.

REY

You, you idiot, you just fired the entire staff! Are you insane?

MERCY

Nobody's fired, Rey. And no, I'm not insane, I'm just upset. Okay?

REY

Okay. Fine.

MERCY

I'm not unreasonable.

REY

Glad to hear it.

MERCY

I just need to talk to Donald.

REY

What?

MERCY

I need to talk to Donald.

REY

Uh, um...

MERCY

Will you come with me, Frank?

FRANK

Sure, no problem Mrs. Turner. We'll have nice chat with old Donald.

He opens the door for Mercy. She gets in.

REY

I mean this with all due respect, Mercy, but Donald Turner is duh, duh, duh dead.

MERCY

You have such a small mind, Rey.

FRANK

Like a peanut.

Frank get's in the passenger side.

Rey notices the Voodoo Beads hanging from the rear view mirror. He reaches in and fluffs them.

REY

I can't believe you believe this
shit.

Mercy grabs Rey's collar. Draws him close.

MERCY

You have no idea the kind of powers
that exist in this world.

Rey pulls back.

REY

Neither do you, Mrs. Turner.

Mercy drives away from the grave, toward the exit. They pass statues of Saints and Angels.

INT. - CUBAN VOODOO SHOP - MIAMI - DAY

Mercy and Frank watch Mr. Chang unload a box of miniature Saints and Angels.

MR. CHANG

Very sorry, but Esmeralda too too
long in the tooth.

MERCY

Just one more, Mr. Chang. That's
all I ask.

MR. CHANG

No! Miss Esmeralda cross over too
many times. Quit the biz, now.
Retired.

MERCY

Don't make me beg, Mr. Chang. I'm
only asking for one last reading.

MR. CHANG

No! Last time she gave one last
reading she not come back for two
months. Lucky miracle we discover
Jazz.

MERCY

I'll buy her every Jazz tune ever
recorded.

MR. CHANG

No! No, no, no!

Mercy scoops a handful of fake coins out of a treasure chest.

MERCY

You owe me, Chang. I took care of you when you almost lost the shop. Esmeralda too.

MR. CHANG

I know, I know, very grateful, but, but...

MERCY

You owe me.

Mr. Chang sighs and shakes his head.

MR. CHANG

Cannot force her. You know that.

MERCY

I know.

Mr. Chang locks the front door. He leads Mercy and Frank through the beaded curtain, into the

THE READING ROOM

Jazz blasting out of the Boombox.

Esmeralda sits at a small table and grooves to the music.

MR. CHANG

Esmeralda?

Esmeralda looks up.

MR. CHANG (CONT'D)

Visitors.

The old woman gives Mercy and Frank a brief glance.

MERCY

It's me, Mercedes. You remember me?

Esmeralda nods her head.

MERCY (CONT'D)

Last year, you predicted I would fall in love with a rich man and get married.

ESMERALDA

No refunds.

MERCY

I didn't come for a refund. Everything you predicted came true. But then my husband died, and...I just want to tell him -

ESMERALDA

- tell him later, when you're both dead.

FRANK

Ma'am, can you turn the music off for a minute? Or at least turn it down.

Esmeralda reaches over and cranks up the volume.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Thank you, that's much better.

MR. CHANG

You need understand. Esmeralda open channel to spirit world sixty years ago. Sixty years! Open, close, open, close, now stuck on open. But Spirits don't like Jazz. Jams channel.

FRANK

What would happen if it stopped?

Mr. Chang reaches over and strokes Esmeralda's white puff of hair.

MR. CHANG

Spirits line up like Disney World, take ride on old Esmeralda.

Esmeralda nods, then turns away to concentrate on the jazz.

FRANK

Well, this was weird and wonderful. Come on Mrs. Turner, you gave it a try.

Frank and Mr. Chang start to leave. Mercy turns back.

MERCY

You give up too easily.

She reaches across the table. Unplugs the Boombox.

Mr. Chang make a dive for it.

Esmeralda lets out a hearty laugh. She kicks back her chair and stands.

MR. CHANG

Esmeralda!

ESMERALDA

Not even close, grandpa.

She notices her body.

ESMERALDA (CONT'D)

Shit, damn it to Hell, I'm an old fart!

She touches her face.

ESMERALDA (CONT'D)

This is what I get?

She tries to leave. Mercy blocks her.

MERCY

Please, whoever you are --

ESMERALDA

-- Victoria. But everyone calls me Vicky.

MERCY

Victoria. Vicky. I need to talk to Donald Turner. Is he there?

Esmeralda cocks an ear, as if listening.

ESMERALDA

(to an unseen person)

So what, most us were murdered. Back of the line!

She pushes Mercy aside.

ESMERALDA (CONT'D)

Thinks he's so damn special.

MERCY
 (shouts after her.)
 What did you say?

ESMERALDA
 What?

MERCY
 Did you say Donald Turner was
 murdered?

ESMERALDA
 He says he was.

MERCY
 Who did it?

Esmeralda cocks an ear.

ESMERALDA
 Someone very close.

MERCY
 Who?

ESMERALDA
 You're cutting into my live time,
 lady. I'm outta here.

She starts to leave and crashes into the religious statues.

ESMERALDA (CONT'D)
 Damn! I think I'd rather be dead
 than old.

She hobbles to the exit.

MR. CHANG
 You happy now?

MERCY
 No, Mr. Chang, I am no happy.

FRANK
 Where did she go?

MR. CHANG
 Sex, drugs, rock and roll. Ugh!
 Dead people love to party.

FRANK
 When is she coming back?

MR. CHANG
Umm, few days. Week. Who know?

MERCY
I'm sorry, Mr. Chang.

Mr. Chang shrugs. Begins picking up the statues.

Mercy kneels down to help.

MERCY (CONT'D)
Esmeralda said Donald was murdered.

MR. CHANG
Yes.

MERCY
Do you believe it?

Mr. Chang nods his head.

MERCY (CONT'D)
What if I'm next?

FRANK
Call the cops.

MERCY
Right. And tell them what?

FRANK
Tell them your dead husband told
some dead girl that he was
murdered, and she told your
Psychic, who is possessed and
missing in action. Simple.

Mr. Chang uprights a statue of a saint wearing white gloves.

MR. CHANG
I know someone. Works with cops.

MERCY
Who?

MR. CHANG
Miss Nadine. Psychic Detective. Top
rate.

FRANK
But does she like Jazz?

Mr. Chang ignores him. He dials his cellphone, waits, then hands it to Mercy.

INT. POLICE STATION -DAY

DETECTIVE LACKER, a black man in his forties, screams into his phone.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Do not give me any more of your
bullshit Voodoo cases, okay? You
got a decapitated goat, throw a
goddamn dinner party!

Mercy enters, unseen.

Detective Lacker slams the phone.

DETECTIVE LACKER (CONT'D)
Superstitious bullshit!

He puts two fingers on his wrist to check his pulse. Breaths deeply. Notices Mercy.

DETECTIVE LACKER (CONT'D)
My apologies, ma'am. Folks around
here seem to believe that because
I'm Haitian I'm an expert on
Voodoo, Santeria, Black Magic, all
sorts of supernatural nonsense.
What can I do for you?

MERCY
I'm meeting my Psychic Detective
here.

DETECTIVE LACKER
What?

MERCY
I was told to come to your office
to meet my Psychic Detective.

Detective Lacker gives her a blank look.

MERCY (CONT'D)
So we can find my husband's
murderer?

DETECTIVE LACKER
I'm sorry, miss...?

MERCY

Mercedes Turner. My file is right on your desk.

Detective Lacker grabs a file folder.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Well that's just swell.

MERCY

My Psychic Detective should be here in a few minutes.

Detective Lacker glances through the file.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Mrs. Turner, I'm truly sorry for your loss. But according to the coroner, your husband died of a heart attack. There is no indication of murder, ma'am. None whatsoever. He just had a bad heart.

Mercy bends over his desk. Looks him in the eyes.

MERCY

My husband had a good heart, Detective. He was murdered.

DETECTIVE LACKER

I feel for you, ma'am -- I really do. I lost my own wife, bless her soul, some years ago.

He gestures to a picture of an ATTRACTIVE WOMAN and a YOUNG CHILD.

DETECTIVE LACKER (CONT'D)

But we can't bring them back.

He shuts the file, tosses it into an OUT basket.

DETECTIVE LACKER (CONT'D)

I'm sorry about your husband, Mrs. Turner, but I am not wasting my time with some bullshit Psychic Detective nut job -

NADINE (O.C.)

- that's solved more cases in the last five years than you will in your entire lifetime.

The voice belongs to NADINE, (40) a tall woman, serious, athletic, with choppy hair and smoldering eyes. She wears white gloves.

Detective Lacker sinks into his chair.

DETECTIVE LACKER
I didn't think you'd have the nerve
to come back.

NADINE
I didn't think you'd have the nerve
to stay.

Nadine helps herself to a seat.

NADINE (CONT'D)
I expect your full cooperation,
Detective.

DETECTIVE LACKER
You're wasting your money, Mrs.
Turner.

Mercy twirls her expensive triple-loop pearl necklace.

Detective Lacker checks his pulse.

DETECTIVE LACKER (CONT'D)
Did you know that it's possible to
reduce your blood pressure by
consciously slowing your pulse?
Mind over matter. Do you believe in
mind over matter, Mrs. Turner?

MERCY
Yes, I do. But Donald just took a
pill for it.

DETECTIVE LACKER
I do that too.

He retrieves the file.

DETECTIVE LACKER (CONT'D)
So so so. Okay. Nadine, what's your
pleasure?

Nadine raises her gloved hands. Wiggles them.

NADINE
I'd like to get in touch with the
recently departed Mr. Turner.

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Mercy, Nadine and Detective Lacker gather around the freshly excavated coffin. A CEMETARY WORKER lifts the lid.

Inside: Donald Turner's corpse, face frozen in a scowl.

Nadine slowly removes her gloves, tucks them into a pocket. Lays her hands on the dead man's body.

NADINE'S VISION

INT - DONALD TURNER'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Donald Turner -- red-faced -- struggles from his chair, clutches his left arm and falls back.

INT. NEW ORLEANS HOME - NIGHT

Mercy (17) bursts into a bedroom. Runs to a night table. Grabs a SKULL TOP PEN.

INT - DONALD TURNER'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Donald Turner fights to breath, to move. He sees a picture of Mercy. Fumbles for the phone. Forces himself to dial.

INT. NEW ORLEANS HOME - NIGHT

Mercy hides behind the door, just as HECTOR (35) bursts into the room.

INT - DONALD TURNER'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

Donald Turner jabs at the buttons on the phone: Nine (pause) One (pause)...

INT. NEW ORLEANS HOME - NIGHT

Mercy steps forward and plunges the SKULL TOP PEN deep into Hector's thigh.

INT - DONALD TURNER'S OFFICE - EARLY MORNING

A HAND slams the phone and knocks over the SKULL TOP PEN.

INT. NEW ORLEANS HOME - NIGHT

Hector screams. The SKULL TOP PEN protrudes from his thigh, red eyes flashing. He staggers and falls to the floor.

END NADINE'S VISION

EXT. CEMETARY - DAY

Nadine jerks away from the body and stumbles into Detective Lacker.

He holds her.

DETECTIVE LACKER

You okay?

She breaks free.

MERCY

What did you see?

Nadine slips shaky hands into the white gloves.

NADINE

I saw you, as a young girl. And Mr. Turner, having a heart attack.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Told you.

NADINE

Someone stopped him from calling nine one one. He might have survived.

MERCY

So he was murdered.

NADINE

Yes.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Oh, please. What did you think she was going to say?

(to Nadine)

I got to tell you, Nadine, I'm impressed. You get to explain the heart attack, and still make money searching for some imaginary murderer.

MERCY

Who was it?

NADINE

I don't know.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Of course.

Nadine stands toe to toe with Detective Lacker.

NADINE

Do you know what I like about me,
Detective? Just one thing. I don't
lie. Ever. About anything. It's why
I don't have friends.

DETECTIVE LACKER

You sure it's not your personality?

Nadine puts a gloved hand on Detective Lacker's chest.

NADINE

I also locate missing body parts,
Detective.

She removes her hand. Steps away.

DETECTIVE LACKER

I've learned one thing in all my
years on the force, Nadine.
Everyone lies. Everyone lies about
everything.

The Cemetery Worker slams the coffin.

NADINE

I want to help, Mercy.

MERCY

What can I do?

NADINE

Do you know anything about a pen?

MERCY

What kind of pen?

NADINE

It's got a, sort of, skull. On top.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Oh, right.

MERCY

Yes. My SKULL TOP PEN. I gave it to Donald.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Really?

NADINE

Did he keep it in his office?

MERCY

Yes.

Nadine turns to Detective Lacker.

NADINE

Thank you for your cooperation, Detective. We'll let you if we have any use for you.

Mercy and Nadine walk away.

DETECTIVE LACKER

(to Cemetary Worker)

That's one scary lady.

CEMETARY WORKER

Which one?

They look at Donald Turner's scowling face.

INT. DONALD TURNER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

The Office is decorated with pictures of Donald Turner and Mercy.

Mercy and Nadine rummage through everything. Rey and Frank watch.

Nadine picks up a stack of papers. Rey yanks it out of her hands.

REY

These papers are confidential.

NADINE

I'm touching them, not reading them.

REY

Will you get the hell out of my office?

FRANK

Looks like Donald Turner's office
to me.

REY

Shut up, Frank.

Nadine reaches over and touches a corner of the desk, next to
the phone. Gets on her knees. Strokes the carpet.

REY (CONT'D)

Do you not understand we're in the
middle of a merger? With Donald
gone they're re-thinking the whole
thing. We need to show the Board
consistency and stability, not some
psychic nut job mucking around on
her hands and knees -

NADINE

- found it!

Nadine points to the SKULL TOP PEN. Everyone gathers to look.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Is that it?

MERCY

Yeah. Donald kept it right next to
the phone. Remember, Rey?

REY

Yes. Hideous thing.

FRANK

I always wondered about that pen.

NADINE

(to Rey)

Do you have any idea how it ended
up on the floor?

REY

How would I know? His wastebasket
is under the desk. He probably
tried to throw it away, which is
what I want to do with the rest of
his shit.

MERCY

Don't you dare touch a thing.

REY
I feel ridiculous here.

MERCY
Then why don't you move back to
your own office?

Rey knocks over a wedding picture.

REY
This is my office! I'm the Acting
President. Give it up, Mrs. Turner.

MERCY
I'll never give it up, Rey.

REY
Why? What are you trying to prove?
You scored big. You got what you
wanted.

MERCY
Yes. And then I lost it.

Rey takes out a handkerchief and uses it to grab the picture
and place it back on the desk.

REY
Please, Mercy, I'm begging you,
will you just stay out my way until
the smoke clears?

Rey wipes the desk where Nadine touched it.

REY (CONT'D)
Talk to her, Frank.

FRANK
Uh, okay. Hi Mercy. How's it going?

MERCY
Fine, Frank. Just fine.

Nadine picks up the SKULL TOP PEN and puts it on the desk.

She takes off a glove. Steels herself. Touches it.

She staggers back, disoriented. Grabs the desk.

Mercy puts an arm on her shoulder. Nadine shrugs it off.

NADINE
That, that pen -- it's drawn blood.

Mercy picks up the SKULL TOP PEN. Examines it. Clicks it.

The red eyes flash.

MERCY

Oh yes. But what does it have to do with the murder?

NADINE

I don't know.

MERCY

What do you mean you don't know?

FRANK

It's got to mean something.

REY

Yeah, it means you hired a lunatic to feed your delusion that Donald Turner was murdered. He had a heart attack. Simple. Am I right, Frank?

Frank shrugs.

Mercy clicks the SKULL TOP PEN. It stops flashing. She returns it to the desk.

Rey approaches her.

REY (CONT'D)

(sympathetic)

Go home, Mercy. You're just overwrought with grief. I'll take care of everything. Relax and enjoy your fortune, like our husband would have wanted.

MERCY

My husband would have wanted revenge.

FRANK

She's got you on that one, Rey.

REY

Shut up, Frank.

Nadine runs her gloved fingers over the desk. Shows Rey the smudges.

NADINE
There's an awful lot of dirt in
this office, Rey.

REY
You can thank your boss for that.

Nadine turns to Mercy.

NADINE
Anything you can tell me?

Mercy shrugs.

FRANK
Then all we got is a pen with a
skull on top. No pun intended, but
we're at a dead end.

MERCY
Esmeralda said the murderer was
someone close.

FRANK
So who are you close to?

MERCY
Nobody. Now that Donald's gone.

FRANK
Relatives?

MERCY
Just my mother and father, but
forget them.

FRANK
Where are they?

MERCY
New Orleans. Forget them.

NADINE
Where you got the pen?

MERCY
Yeah, but they don't know if I'm
dead or alive. I'd like to keep it
that way.

NADINE
I think that's where you need to
go.

MERCY

I...no...I can't see them again.

NADINE

Then we are at a dead end.

Mercy picks up the wedding picture.

MERCY

(to the picture)

What should I do, Donald? What would you tell me to do?

REY

(imitating Donald's voice)

Go home, my little peach. Enjoy your fortune. Have a ball.

MERCY

Thank you, Rey. You've helped me tremendously.

REY

Good. I'm glad we -

MERCY

(to Nadine)

How soon can you leave?

NADINE

No. I can't go with you.

MERCY

Why not? You have to.

Nadine hugs herself. Shudders.

NADINE

I spent a year in New Orleans after Katrina, with search and rescue. I can't deal with those vibes again. Not in this lifetime.

MERCY

I can't go alone. I need someone.

NADINE

How about Frank?

REY

No.

MERCY

(to Frank)

What about it, Frank. Will you come with me? For moral support?

FRANK

Definitely.

REY

No way. Frank has too much work. I can't spare him.

MERCY

I didn't ask you, Rey, I asked Frank.

REY

I'm answering for Frank. He reports to me. He does what I say.

Mercy walks around the desk, nudges Rey aside. Sits in her deceased husband's chair.

MERCY

You know, Donald used to talk about the merger a lot. He said it's customary, when there's a change in ownership, for many of the Senior Executives to be replaced. But you've been with us for such a long time, Rey, I hope you'll consider staying on.

Rey struggles to control himself.

MERCY (CONT'D)

Don't you think that's a good idea, Rey?

REY

You seem to be full of good ideas, Mrs. Turner.

MERCY

Good. Then we understand each other.

FRANK

(to Rey)

So, I have your blessing?

REY

Shut up, Frank.

Mercy gets up and saunters to the door. Nadine stops in front of Rey, makes a claw with her gloved hand and hisses at him. Both women leave the Office.

Rey slams the door.

REY (CONT'D)

Listen real hard, you little pipsqueak. You try to screw me and I'll clean out your ears with a goddamn ice pick.

FRANK

Really? An ice pick? That's a weird metaphor, Rey, I'm not sure I get it.

REY

Fair warning, Frank. Don't try to steal the deal. The Bank is mine. Am I loud and clear!

FRANK

Like a grenade.

Rey sits in Donald Turner's chair. Swivels nervously.

REY

I can't believe the old man had a fucking heart attack.

FRANK

I guess you forgot to tell God about your little plan.

REY

You're lucky I told you. Now here's your new and improved plan. Take our new boss to New Orleans. Keep her out of my hair. And stay out of her pants.

FRANK

Take the boss...keep out of hair...get in pants...I'm confused. Maybe I better write it down. Where's that nice pen?

Rey picks up the SKULL TOP PEN.

REY

Listen, I will burn your smart ass like you can't imagine.

FRANK

What happened to ice pick in the ear? Do I get a choice?

Rey clicks the SKULL TOP PEN.

REY

You know Frank, I am very impressed. Most other men as knee deep in shit as you are would be on their knees, puckering up and kissing my ass.

FRANK

That's disgusting, Rey.

REY

Get the hell out of here.

Frank starts to leave. Glances over his shoulder.

FRANK

Of course, I can't help it if the grieving widow falls in love with me.

Rey throws the SKULL TOP PEN at his back.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Ow! Damn, Rey, I think you drew blood.

REY

Consider it a down payment.

Frank picks up the SKULL TOP PEN. The red eyes flash.

FRANK

Kind of reminds me of you.

He clicks it on and off as he leaves the Office.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The *seat belt* sign clicks on and off as Mercy walks down the aisle and takes the seat next to Frank.

FRANK

I ordered you a root beer.

Mercy takes a sip.

MERCY
You ordered this for me?

Frank nods.

MERCY (CONT'D)
Why?

FRANK
You like root beer.

MERCY
How would you know? You barely know me.

FRANK
I ordered you a veggie burger.

MERCY
Who told you?

FRANK
Peeping Tom.

MERCY
What?

FRANK
It's a software I invented. It gets information off the internet and creates an employee profile. It's a great investment for Turner Bank.

MERCY
Wow, I'm really impressed, Frank.

FRANK
Thank you.

MERCY
Yeah, I didn't think you were that much of a dick.

FRANK
What? How am I a dick?

MERCY
Pretending to like me so I'd invest in your stupid invention. That qualifies for dickhood in my book.

FRANK

For you information, Rey already agreed to finance my invention. I was just telling you about it. And it's not stupid, it's brilliant.

MERCY

Sounds stupid.

FRANK

Peeping Tom is going to revolutionize hiring. And dating.

MERCY

Oh, I get it. You use Peeping Tom to pick up girls. "I like root beer and veggie burgers, too, we have so much in common, let's have sex!"

FRANK

It's not like that. It's not about sex. It takes a psychological snapshot of your brain. It can help people find true love.

MERCY

Really? How many women have you used it on?

FRANK

A few.

MERCY

Be honest. How many?

FRANK

Twenty eight.

MERCY

And how many fell in love with you?

FRANK

That's not the point.

MERCY

It won't work, Frank. You know why? You don't love with your brain, you love with your heart.

FRANK

Like you loved Donald Turner?

Mercy slides open the widow shade. Light streams in.

MERCY

He adored me, and I loved him
because of that.

FRANK

Nobody believes you.

MERCY

Why? Because he had more wrinkles?

FRANK

No, because people can't imagine
Donald Turner actually loving
anyone.

MERCY

Well, he did. I experienced another
part of him. The best part.

FRANK

Yeah, his wallet.

MERCY

Shut up, Frank. I can't imagine why
Rey agreed to finance your weird
little invention. He never told
Donald about it.

FRANK

Maybe he did. I'm sure Mr. Tuner
didn't tell you everything.

MERCY

Only everything important. He never
mentioned you.

Frank reaches past Mercy and slams the window shade.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Detective Lacker slams his filing cabinet.

DETECTIVE LACKER

You don't have a shred of proof,
Nadine. Not even the smallest, itsy
bitsy iota of proof.

NADINE

I don't need proof. I have the
truth.

DETECTIVE LACKER

The truth isn't worth anything. I need proof.

NADINE

Then get it.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Exactly how do you suggest I do that?

NADINE

When the Bank is closed the security cameras in the offices are turned on. They turn them off during the day for privacy. Get the tapes.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Get real. Do you know how many questions it's going to raise if I demand those tapes? On what possible grounds? Some crazy psychic with a couple of visions?

He checks his pulse, breaths deeply.

NADINE

I'll go over your head if I have to.

DETECTIVE LACKER

You'd cut off my head if you had to.

NADINE

I would if that's what it took to find the truth.

She tosses a file folder on his desk.

NADINE (CONT'D)

My visions aren't perfect, we both know that. Sometimes they're off. Sometimes they're...too late. But sometimes I hit a bull's-eye. This feels like a bull's eye.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Feels more like bullshit.

NADINE

I'll make a deal with you, then. If the tapes don't show anything, I'll admit I'm a fraud. I'll resign the account. You'll never have to suffer my face again.

Detective Lacker looks at her very carefully.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Okay, Nadine. But if it turns out that you're right...

(he pauses)

You have to let me buy you dinner.

Nadine shrugs.

NADINE

Call the acting president, Mr. Rey Barrio. We're best friends.

Nadine leaves the Office as DORTHEA, a young girl, enters. They briefly lock eyes.

Dorthea has Detective Lacker's features. She wears a Catholic middle-school uniform and carries a brown bag.

DORTHEA

That lady - I know her. I remember the white gloves.

DETECTIVE LACKER

You were very young. What did you bring me?

DORTHEA

Turkey sandwich, unsalted chips and a pickle.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Low salt turkey?

DORTHEA

Of course. I picked out the salt myself, with a pair of tweezers.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Ah, I knew you'd come in handy some day.

He puts the bag in a drawer.

DORTHEA

I remember her, from when we found out mom died. She was in the bathroom, crying. I didn't know why.

DETECTIVE LACKER

You never told me.

DORTHEA

I don't tell you everything. Us women have our secrets, you know.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Really?

DORTHEA

Well, I don't have too many yet.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Good.

DORTHEA

But I'm working on it.

Detective Lacker checks his pulse, breathes deeply. He goes to the window. Looks at the Chinese Restaurant across the street.

The alley next to it is littered with garbage.

INT/EXT. NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Frank drives Mercy through the garbage strewn Ninth Ward. Broken windows. Torn roofs. Weeds.

FRANK

You sure you can find your home in this mess?

She points to a corner house.

MERCY

That one, there. Stop the car.

The house looks like it was demolished by a hurricane.

FRANK

This must be difficult, seeing your childhood home all broken down.

MERCY

It's nicer than I remember it.

They go inside.

INT. NEW ORLEANS HOME - DAY

Gutted. Caked with mold and dust.

Frank and Mercy step over the debris. Enter a bedroom with a broken door, three rusty deadbolts still attached.

MERCY

My bedroom.

FRANK

Three deadbolts? Isn't that overkill?

Mercy ignores him. Goes to a broken window.

Four strips of wood are nailed into the wall, from the inside.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Jesus, Mercy, talk about overkill. What were you trying to keep out, wolves?

Mercy runs her hands over the wood. Picks up a shard of glass.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Can we get the hell out of here? This place creeps me out.

Mercy holds the shard of glass over her wrist.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Hello, earth to Mercy.

Frank touches Mercy's shoulder. She startles. Drops the glass shard. Turns around.

Her eyes are huge. She's shaking.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Are you okay? You look...weird.

Mercy pushes him aside and bolts out of the house. Frank follows.

EXT. NEW ORLEANS HOME - DAY

Mercy runs to the car and gets in. Frank sits next to her.

FRANK
You okay?

MERCY
I'm sorry...this house...it
has...it has...

FRANK
Too many good memories?

MERCY
Yeah, that's it.

Frank starts the car.

FRANK
Where to now?

Mercy lets out a huge sigh.

MERCY
Zombie House.

FRANK
What?

MERCY
Zombie House.

FRANK
What is that, a halfway house for
homeless Zombies?

MERCY
Everything's a joke to you, isn't
it.

FRANK
Come on, Zombie House? You made
that up. Right?

EXT. ZOMBIE HOUSE - DAY

Mercy and Frank get out the car and stand in front of Zombie House.

Mercy goes to the front window. Her reflection is ghastly. She presses her face against the dirty glass and looks inside.

INT. ZOMBIE HOUSE - DAY

A fire-damaged table with four chairs sits against a wall. The images of three people begin to materialize.

MERCY'S FLASHBACK

INT. ZOMBIE HOUSE - NEW ORLEANS - NIGHT

MERCY, (17), sits next to LOUISE (35), a stunning lady just starting to wilt, and MARCELLO, (35) a pasty man with a cigarette stuck to his lip.

MERCY

It's sick, mother. I don't want to do it.

LOUISE

So what?

MERCY

So what if I refuse? What are you going to do?

LOUISE

Not a thing, Precious. I won't do a thing. But your father is not as lenient as I am.

MERCY

If he touches me I'll kill him.

LOUISE

Feel free.

MARCELLO

Come on, sweetheart, don't make trouble, huh? Be nice and quiet and let us work Mrs. Alonso.

MERCY

Who is she, anyway?

MARCELLO

Only the most important person in the world.

(MORE)

MARCELLO (CONT'D)

She's dripping in money, and her daughter died last week. Was it last week, Louise?

LOUISE

Two weeks ago. Leukemia. She was your age, Precious. Her name is Anna. Remember that. Anna.

MARCELLO

We can feed off her for years, if we play it right.

MERCY

Why don't you all just get real jobs? Like normal people.

Louise and Marcello chuckle.

MARCELLO

Too late for us, honey.

LOUISE

We couldn't get hired in Hell.

MARCELLO

Please, sweetheart, all you have to do is sit here -

LOUISE

- and keep your mouth shut. Those are your father's orders, Precious. And we have to do what Hector says. Right Marcello?

MARCELLO

For now.

The curtain is swept aside for Mrs. Alonso (40s) a thin, grief-ravaged woman, in black.

Hector (35) follows her into the room.

Mrs. Alonso gives a tilt of recognition to Marcello and Louise. Locks eyes on Mercy.

HECTOR

Mrs. Alonso, I'd like to introduce you to my daughter, Mercedes. She's fifteen years old, just like Anna.

Mrs. Alonso examines Mercy with bloodshot eyes. Reaches over. Strokes her hair.

MRS. ALONSO
 (soft & hoarse)
 Do you have any idea how much your
 parents love you, child? How they
 would walk through cut glass for
 you? Die for you?

Mercy reaches out and touches Mrs. Alonso's cheek.

Hector helps Mrs. Alonzo to her seat.

MRS. ALONSO (CONT'D)
 I've never done anything like this.
 Is it dangerous?

HECTOR
 Not at all. I wouldn't expose my
 own daughter to anything dangerous.

He winks at Mercy.

MRS. ALONSO
 Anna was my little princess.

HECTOR
 She still is, Mrs. Alonzo. She's
 still your little princess.

MRS. ALONSO
 What do I have to do?

HECTOR
 First, place your love-offering in
 the center of the table.

Mrs. Alonzo takes a check out of her purse and puts it on the table. Hector places a candle on top. Hands Mrs. Alonzo a match.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
 Go ahead.

Mrs. Alonzo lights the candle. Marcello dims the lights and starts the New Age music.

LOUISE
 Join hands, everyone.

Everyone holds hands.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Everyone close your eyes and do not
open them until I tell you. No
matter what, do not open your eyes.

Mrs. Alonzo looks around for a moment.

Everyone else shuts their eyes.

Mrs. Alonzo shuts her eyes.

Everyone else opens their eyes.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

We call upon you, great spirits
from beyond the veil, to send us
Anna Alonso, daughter of Edith and
Carlos Alonso. We ask this in the
name of a mother's love. Come to us
Anna, come to me...come into
me...into me... into...

For a moment there is only the sound of breathing, the music,
the flickering candle.

Then Louise starts to speak, in a young girl's voice.

LOUISE (CONT'D)

Mommy? Mommy are you here? Where
are you, Mommy?

Mrs. Alonzo's eyes snap open.

MRS. ALONSO

Anna? Oh my God, no. Anna? Anna!

LOUISE

Mommy, it's me, your little
princess. Can you hear me?

Mrs. Alonzo bursts into tears.

MRS. ALONSO

I can hear you. Oh, my little
princess, I miss you so much...

Mercy, appalled, shakes her head.

MRS. ALONSO (CONT'D)

I love you so much.

LOUISE

I love you too, Mommy.

Hector looks at Mercy, puts a finger to his lips.

Mercy gives him the finger. Slaps the table.

MERCY
I'm here, Mama! It's me. Your
little princess.

MRS. ALONSO
What?

MERCY
It's me. It's Anna.

Mrs. Alonzo looks at Mercy. At Louise. At Mercy.

MRS. ALONSO
Which, which one of you? I don't
understand.

MERCY
Get out of here, Mama. Leave now!
These are bad people!

Mrs. Alonzo jumps out of her chair, knocks over the candle
and grabs her check. The tablecloth catches fire.

Mrs. Alonzo storms out through the beaded curtain.

Hector starts after her.

HECTOR
Mrs. Alonzo! Stop! Wait! Mrs.
Alonzo!

He turns back to help Marcello deal with the fire.

MARCELLO
Don't hurt her, Hector.

HECTOR
I'll break her in half.

MARCELLO
She's just a little girl.

Mercy scrambles up a set of stairs and into her

BEDROOM

She runs to a night table, grabs the SKULL TOP PEN, and hides
behind the door.

The sound of heavy feet stomping up the stairs.

MARCELLO (O.C.) (CONT'D)
Don't hurt her, man.

Hector bursts into the room.

Mercy steps forward and plunges the SKULL TOP PEN deep into Hector's thigh.

Hector screams. His leg buckles. He falls to the kitchen floor.

The SKULL TOP PEN protrudes from his thigh, red eyes flashing.

Louise and Marcello rush into the room. Stop. Watch Hector writhe and moan, pounding the floor in agony.

Louise smiles. Marcello smirks.

Mercy yanks the bloody SKULL TOP PEN out of her father's thigh.

She takes a long look at her mother, then walks down the stairs.

MARCELLO (CONT'D)
(shouts)
Where are you going?

Mercy stops to glance at her reflection in a wall mirror.

With the SKULL TOP PEN, she scratches the words "*from hell*" and steps out the door.

END MERCY'S FLASHBACK

EXT. ZOMBIE HOUSE - DAY

The door screeches open.

Louise(45)steps into the doorway.

LOUISE
There you are, Precious. And look
at you -- all grown up.

She tries to hug Mercy. Frank waves an awkward hello.

FRANK
Hi, I'm Frank.

Louise gives him a nasty look, then steps aside. They enter
Zombie House. The door shuts.

INT. ZOMBIE HOUSE - DAY

A rundown Voodoo shop.

Hector (45) thumps down the stairs, one hand on the
bannister, the other gripping a cane.

He limps toward Mercy. She steps back. He sits on a stool by
the counter. Frank sits next to him.

FRANK
Hi, I'm Frank, I know you don't
care.

Hector ignores him. Addresses Mercy.

HECTOR
Your rich husband left you a hefty
fortune, didn't he? Your mom and I
taught you well.

MERCY
I didn't marry him for the money.

LOUISE
True love, was it?

Louise and Hector burst out laughing.

Mercy notices a bottle of love potion on the shelf. Picks it
up.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
You want that, Precious? You can
take it.

She puts the bottle back.

MERCY
It's expired.

LOUISE
Don't worry, I'm sure you'll find
true love again, pretty girl like
you. And you're rich now, aren't
you?

MERCY
 (to Hector)
 Did you murder my husband?

HECTOR
 What? I didn't even know about your
 damn husband until...

MERCY
 Until what?

LOUISE
 Until we read about it.

MERCY
 You're lying. It never would have
 hit New Orleans.

FRANK
 It's possible...

HECTOR
 I don't remember where I read it.
 What difference does it make?

MERCY
 It makes a big difference.

She whips out the SKULL TOP PEN and clicks it in Hector's
 face.

MERCY (CONT'D)
 Remember Blinky?

Hector recoils.

HECTOR
 Damn you! I didn't murder your damn
 husband.

LOUISE
 We haven't been to Miami in ages.

HECTOR
 The last we went was years ago,
 with Marcello. To visit his big
 shot brother. You remember
 Marcello, don't you?

FRANK
 Who's Marcello?

Nobody answers for several beats.

LOUISE
He was our business partner.

HECTOR
A total loser. Right Louise?

Louise looks away.

HECTOR (CONT'D)
Right Louise? Wasn't Marcello a
total loser?

LOUISE
What do you want me to say, Hector?

HECTOR
Why don't you tell your daughter
the truth?

LOUISE
We don't know the truth.

FRANK
Maybe I should go.

Frank stands. Mercy digs her nails into his arm.

MERCY
The truth about what, Mom?

LOUISE
Your father thinks he shoots
blanks. But he was never tested.

HECTOR
And by the way, your mother is a
whore.

MERCY
What?

HECTOR
She was fucking my business
partner. And God knows who else.

LOUISE
I told you, nobody else.

MERCY
Are you saying Marcello is my
biological father?

Louise looks at Hector.

MERCY (CONT'D)
Don't you want to know?

HECTOR
I know.

MERCY
Not for sure.

Mercy makes a motion to Frank. They pounce on Hector.

He fights back.

Mercy grabs a fist full of hair and gouges it out with the scissors.

MERCY (CONT'D)
Got it!

Hector clutches his head. Blood leaks through his fingers.

HECTOR
You're dead! You're all dead!

He struggles to his feet.

LOUISE
We better leave now, give him a
chance to calm down.

Hector staggers toward the Reading Room.

LOUISE (CONT'D)
Now!

The three of them rush out of the house.

Hector barrels out of the Reading Room, shotgun in hand.

The front door closes just as he fires, blasting it open.

When the door shuts again there's a hole the size of a grapefruit.

From upstairs, the sound of someone clapping. Hector lowers his shotgun and looks up. Rey Barrio takes out a handkerchief and uses it to hold the bannister as he walks down the stairs.

REY
Nice job, Hector. And I was
actually going to pay you.

Hector aims the shotgun at Rey.

HECTOR

What do you mean -- was? You owe me two grand, pal.

Rey keeps walking.

REY

For what do I owe you, Rey? Did you convince Mercy that her husband wasn't murdered? No. Did you convince her to take the money and run? No. Did you advise her that she's about to blow her fortune? No.

Hector cocks his shotgun.

HECTOR

I'm about to blow your fortune, Rey. I want that money.

Rey keeps walking.

REY

Do you have any idea how much it cost to kill an innocent man nowadays?

HECTOR

What the Hell are you talking about?

REY

If you kill me, you'll spend your last dime just to keep them from sending 2000 volts of electricity through your skull. And if you're lucky enough to win life in prison, you'll discover that the only thing worse than being broke - is being broke in prison. Do you understand what I'm saying?

Hector lowers the gun.

REY (CONT'D)

You can't afford to murder a bum on the street - you'll never be rich enough to kill someone like me.

Rey brushes past him.

REY (CONT'D)

I don't know how you people live
like this.

He opens the door with his handkerchief. Drops it and steps
outside.

EXT. FRENCH QUARTER - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Frank steps inside Slappy White's Bar.

Louise and Mercy continue walking. They enter the St. Louis
Cathedral.

INT. SAINT LOUIS CATHEDRAL - DAY

Mercy and Louise walk down the aisle. Stop at the sign that
reads: PLEASE DO NOT ENTER THE SANCTUARY.

They get down on their knees. Clasp their hands.

LOUISE

(whispers)

If I could do it over again,
Precious, knowing what I know now,
I'd do it all different.

MERCY

(whispers)

Like what?

Louise raises her eyes to a statue of Jesus. Does the Sign of
the Cross.

LOUISE

For one thing, I would have paid
someone to kill the son-of-a-bitch.
Then it would have been just the
two of us. You and me, Precious.

MERCY

And Marcello.

A NICE FAMILY walks past them and files into the pew.

LOUISE

Marcello adored me, but he feared
Hector more. It made him miserable.
Now I'm stuck with Hector.

MERCY

Why mother? Why don't you just
leave him?

Louise bows her head.

LOUISE

Precious, you're too young to know,
but hate makes an awfully strong
glue.

A stained glass picture depicts Jesus offering a cup to
Judas.

INT. SLAPPY WHITE'S BAR - DAY

The BARTENDER, a grizzled old man, offers Frank a beer.

FRANK

Can I ask you something?

The Bartender cocks an ear.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You ever do something so out of
character -- so *not like you* -- and
then it snowballs, and then you
can't believe the kind of shit
you're in?

The Bartender slaps a wet rag on the counter.

BARTENDER

What I've learned, Pal, is there
ain't no such thing as *out of
character*. Whatever you do, that's
who you are.

FRANK

Great. Thanks. You bartenders sure
know the right thing to say.

BARTENDER

It is what it is.

Rey enters the bar. He wipes the seat next to Frank with a
handkerchief. Sits and drops it on the floor.

He takes the beer bottle from Frank and examines it.

REY

I don't know how you people drink this cheap shit. They probably siphon it from the sewer.

FRANK

You would know, Rey.

REY

Surprised to see me?

FRANK

Nothing you do surprises me. Peeping Tom predicted you'd come to New Orleans.

The bartender hobbles over to take Rey's order. Rey waves him away.

REY

What else did Peeping Tom say about me?

Frank snatches back his bottle of beer.

FRANK

You're very, very smart, Rey. In fact, you have everything it takes to make a fortune. But you'll blow it.

REY

Really? And why does Peeping Tom think that, pray tell?

FRANK

Because winning isn't enough for you. You'll go an extra step just to hurt someone. And that's when you'll fall of the cliff. You're just a sadistic, ego-centric jackass, Rey Barrio. Peeping Tom's opinion, of course. I think you're terrific.

REY

You know what I think, Frank? I think Peeping Tom is your alter-ego, like a ventriloquist's Dummy. I think you use it to say what you really think.

FRANK

I said you were smart.

Rey takes out a handkerchief and wipes his hands. Drops it on the floor.

REY

Listen, you can insult me all you like. I don't really care. Just bring Mercy back to Miami. We'll give her the same treatment we planned for the old man.

FRANK

She's not going to roll over and take it, Rey.

REY

We won't give her a choice.

FRANK

I can erase everything -- make like it never happened.

REY

You do that and I'll erase you. Make like you never happened.

FRANK

We're bankers, Rey. We're not fucking Mafia. We're just bankers.

REY

Don't be a fool, Frank. Who do think tells the Mafia what to do? Look behind any President, any King, the goddamn Pope -- you'll find a banker with his hand up their ass.

FRANK

Who do you think you are, King Shit?

Rey nods his head.

REY

Absolutely. I am King Shit. And every King needs his Fool.

FRANK

Well this fool is calling the police.

Rey laughs.

REY

You're not that big a fool. You're
in too deep.

Frank takes a long swig.

REY (CONT'D)

But don't be this way. All I'm
asking you to do is get the little
whore off this murder kick and
bring her back to Miami. Then we'll
force her to roll over, screw her
brains out, and make a fortune.

Frank smashes him with the bottle. Rey spins around. Falls
off the stool.

Frank takes a gulp and holds up the bottle.

FRANK

Long live King Shit!

INT. CAR - DRIVING - NEW ORLEANS - DAY

Mercy holds up the crusty CLUMP of Hector's hair. Compares it
to a strand of her own.

MERCY

It looks like my hair.

FRANK

Well that settles it then.

She holds the Clump against Frank's hair.

MERCY

Looks like yours, too.

Frank pushes her hand away.

FRANK

Not even close.

MERCY

Closer than you think.

FRANK

I'm not like your dad, Mercy.

MERCY

No, but you're worse than the real Peeping Tom.

FRANK

How's that?

MERCY

The real Peeping Tom tried to see a little skin. But you, you try to look right through the skin into a person's innermost self. You make the real Peeping Tom look like a Saint.

Frank pulls into the parking lot of DNA TESTING LAB.

FRANK

You're one to talk, sitting there with a piece of your father's scalp.

Mercy brushes the Clump against Frank's ear. He swats her hand away.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Stop it. That's gross. Besides, you're picking up my DNA.

INT. OFFICE - DNA TESTING LAB - DAY

Mercy dangles Hector's Clump in front of LORETTA, (60), a lady in a lab coat.

Loretta holds a plastic bag under the hair. Mercy drops it inside.

MERCY

Sorry, it's a little messy.

Loretta starts labeling the bag.

LORETTA

Don't worry 'bout that, Ma'am. This morning someone brung in a chunk of hair with half the boy's head attached. I swear it winked at me. Some folks think you got to scrape up a little blood or it ain't going to work.

FRANK

But you don't actually need the
blood, do you?

LORETTA

Nope.

FRANK

I told you, Mercy. You're so
bloodthirsty.

MERCY

I am not.

FRANK

According to Peeping Tom -

MERCY

- I'm sick of Peeping Tom. I don't
believe it.

FRANK

It's more believable than Seances
or Psychic Detectives.

Loretta looks up with an expression of concern. She stops
writing.

MERCY

It's true, most Psychics are scams.
But not Nadine. She's very talented
and she's a Truth Teller. And
Esmeralda, damn, that woman can
talk to the dead.

FRANK

So what? Just because someone is
dead doesn't mean they're not full
of shit.

MERCY

(to Loretta)

Can you believe this guy?

LORETTA

He a handful. Now you, honey.

Loretta hands Frank a pair of scissors.

FRANK

No blood?

LORETTA

Just a few strands of hair is fine.

Frank faces Mercy. Runs his fingers through her hair and isolates a few strands.

Mercy studies his face. They look into each other's eyes.

He snips the hair.

LORETTA (CONT'D)

It is forbidden, you know.

MERCY/FRANK

(embarrassed)

What?

LORETTA

Necromancy. Communicating with the spirits of the dead.

MERCY

Oh, that.

LORETTA

The Bible says that he who consults a Witch should be put to death.

FRANK

You hear that, Mercy?

Loretta gives Mercy a disapproving look.

LORETTA

Samuel, chapter twenty eight, four through twenty five. King Saul commanded the Witch of Endor to call forth the spirit of his father, Samuel. The Witch of Endor pretended to be Samuel, when suddenly the real spirit of Samuel appeared. He cursed King Saul and all his children.

FRANK

Now why would Samuel curse his own grandchildren? Who does that?

LORETTA

Well, I figure when God smacks you upside the head, it hurt so bad your grandchildren feel the pain. Don't piss off God, young man.

She holds up a silver Jesus.

LORETTA (CONT'D)
Jesus is the answer.

FRANK
Is the question what rhymes with
sneezes?

LORETTA
That is the most blasphemous thing
I've ever heard.

FRANK
Thank you.

MERCY
Why don't you just shut up, Frank?
You're being a real dick.

FRANK
I don't have to shut up.

MERCY
Yes you do. You work for me, now.
Shut up is in your job description.

FRANK
Funny, that's what Rey told me.

Loretta leans forward and peers at Frank.

LORETTA
Will you accept Jesus, son?

Frank whips out a credit card.

FRANK
Will you accept Visa?

Loretta takes the card and swipes it on a credit card
machine.

INT. HARRAH'S HOTEL - DAY

Mercy and Frank play side by side slot machines.

FRANK
I wonder how many people here are
gambling because their rooms aren't
ready.

He pushes a button on the slot machine. Loses.

MERCY

I like it better the old fashioned way.

She tugs on the slot machine lever.

MERCY (CONT'D)

I won!

FRANK

Great. Maybe you can start paying for things.

Mercy tosses a handful of chips to Frank. Frank feeds the slot machine.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I just think it's weird that someone reported all your credit card stolen.

MERCY

I know.

FRANK

And you don't have any others?

Frank pushes the slot machine button. Loses.

MERCY

I told you no. Stop freaking out, I'll pay you back. I own a bank, remember?

Mercy feeds the slot machine.

FRANK

So how does it feel to own a bank?

MERCY

Honestly? It feels...spectacular. In fact, I'm planning to go into the vault, take off every stitch of clothing, and roll around in a million bucks. Yeah, I like owning a bank.

Mercy pulls the lever.

FRANK
You don't know anything about
banking.

Mercy wins.

MERCY
I win again!

FRANK
There's more to running a bank than
rolling around naked in a million
bucks - although that is extremely
important. You need to understand
finance, economics, information
technology.

MERCY
Nope. I just need to understand
nerds. Like you. And I do.

Mercy feeds the slot machine.

FRANK
What about Rey?

MERCY
Rey's history. After the merger.

FRANK
Don't underestimate him. He
probably reported your credit cards
stolen. He plays hardball.

MERCY
Then I'll just have to cut off his
hardballs.

Mercy tugs the lever. Loses.

FRANK
It's not that easy. And ouch.

Frank Feeds the slot machine.

Mercy feeds the slot machine.

MERCY
I'm not worried. I got you on my
side, right?

Mercy pulls the lever.

FRANK
(after brief hesitation)
Right.

Frank pushes the button.

The numbers on both slot machine spin and light up.

EXT. - TURNER BANK - NIGHT

Rey lights a cigar, offers one to Detective Lacker.

REY
You ever smoke a fifty five dollar
cigar, Detective? It's an Arturo
Fuente Opus X - a rare treat.

Rey savors a few puffs. Offers one to Detective Lacker, who declines.

DETECTIVE LACKER
No sir. Not on a cop's salary. An
honest cop's salary.

REY
Go ahead, Detective. Enjoy a taste
of the high life.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Thank you, sir, appreciate the
offer, but I had an uncle who died
of mouth cancer. Not a pretty
sight.

REY
Oh. Well. I'm sure that's from
smoking cheap cigars.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Maybe so, sir.

REY
You know, Detective, there's a lot
of money in corporate security.
Once the merger goes through, we
may have an opening for someone
with your talent. Interested?

DETECTIVE LACKER
I'll roll it around in my head. But
right now I'm interested in the
security guard who was on duty when
Mr. Turner died.

REY
Carlos.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Yes.

REY
He made a mistake, Detective. He's
been disciplined.

DETECTIVE LACKER
He swears he turned on the camera.

REY
Of course. They all do.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Sure. Of course. If he did turn
them on, could someone else have
turned them off?

Rey puffs his cigar.

REY
Possible, but not likely. The
system is computer controlled and
password protected. It's more
likely there was a power surge.
When my I T guy come back from a
business trip I'll have him check
into it.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Who has the password?

REY
The Security Guard. And, the I T
guy.

DETECTIVE LACKER
And you?

REY
Of course. Look, detective,
accidents happen.

He touches the bruise on his head.

REY (CONT'D)

It's just an unfortunate coincidence that Carlos forgot to turn on the cameras the night Mr. Turner died -- of a heart attack. A damn heart attack. That's all it was.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Most likely. Who's your I T guy?

REY

Oh, uh, Frank? He's out of town, but I'll tell him to give you a call.

DETECTIVE LACKER

I'll be anticipating that. One more thing, Mr. Barrio. Do you think it's possible Mrs. Turner knew the password?

REY

I suppose so. What are you implying, Detective? What possible motivation could Mrs. Turner have for killing her poor elderly husband? Even if he was murdered, which I seriously doubt.

DETECTIVE LACKER

You and me both, Mr. Barrio.

REY

And why would she make up this whole 'my husband was murdered' nonsense? It would be crazy, right?

DETECTIVE LACKER

Yeah. Crazy. Someone would have to be a real lunatic to do that.

Rey taps out his cigar.

REY

A real lunatic.

INT. MERCY'S HOTEL ROOM - HARRAH'S - NIGHT

A tap at the door. Mercy opens it wearing a sexy dress.

She spins around for Frank's approval.

MERCY

I am flying, Franky, flying!

She staggers and knocks over several small, empty liquor bottles.

Frank catches her.

FRANK

Woah! Oh crap!

MERCY

Don't worry, they're empty.

FRANK

That's what worries me. You *can't* drink.

MERCY

But I did, so I can.

FRANK

You *shouldn't* drink.

Frank helps her to the kitchen counter.

MERCY

Is that what Peep - Peep - Peepy Tom told you?

FRANK

Peeping Tom. Yeah.

MERCY

Peepy Tom, Peepy Tom.

FRANK

Okay, I think we're done for the night.

MERCY

Is it Peepy Tom? No, more like...Penis Tom. Tom Penis. Hello, I'm Tom Penis. A pleasure to meet you.

Mercy offers her hand. Frank takes it.

FRANK

Yeah, pleasure to meet you too.

He leads Mercy to the bed.

MERCY

Are you going to do nasty things to me? While I'm drunk, and vulnerable?

FRANK

The thought did cross my mind. But contrary to what you said about me, I am not a dick.

MERCY

No, you're a penis. Tom Penis. And I like you!

Mercy throws herself at him.

He fights her off.

FRANK

Mercy, don't. You're too drunk.

MERCY

Drunk on passion!

Mercy leans in and kisses him. He stops resisting.

She bursts into tears. Pushes him away.

MERCY (CONT'D)

I don't have anyone to love me anymore. Not a single person. Nobody. What am I going to do?

FRANK

I don't know, Mercy. That really sucks.

MERCY

My head hurts, Frank. Get me some ice.

She hands him the ice bucket.

FRANK

Wait for me, okay? Don't go anywhere.

MERCY

Where would I go?

Frank leaves the room.

Mercy gets up. Peeks through the door. Watches Frank step into the ice room.

Frank's wallet in hand, she steps into the

HALLWAY

and calls for the elevator. It opens just as Frank comes out. She turns and waves, then steps inside.

Frank lunges for the button, but the doors close.

He takes out his cellphone and dials.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Rey Barrio looks at Frank's name on his cellphone. Touches the bruise on his head.

REY
Hello Frank.

INTERCUT

FRANK
Hello Rey.

REY
You're going to pay for what you did, Frank. Nobody fucks with Rey Barrio and gets away with it.

He glances aside, as if making the point to someone in the room.

FRANK
I'm already paying, Rey. She doesn't have a dime to her name.

REY
Yeah, pretty clever, huh? Am I brilliant or what?

FRANK
Yeah brilliant. Are you going to reimburse me?

REY
You'll be lucky if I don't kill you.

He glances at someone again.

FRANK
I'll be lucky if I don't kill
myself.

REY
Just get her back to Miami.

FRANK
Will you reimburse me?

REY
Yeah, sure.

FRANK
For everything?

REY
Sure. I'll reimburse you and then
I'll kill you.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Rey hangs up. He's in a rundown apartment.

Seated at a table: Marcello (45) gaunt and leather-faced, a
lit cigarette stuck to his mouth.

REY
How much do you figure I've paid
you over the last few years,
Marcello? Ball park.

MARCELLO
No idea, Half-Bro. It's not the
kind of shit you itemize on a tax
return. It's all chump change,
anyway.

REY
This last job was some serious
chump.

Marcello pours himself a shot of whiskey. Downs it.

MARCELLO
Yeah.

REY
And you blew it.

MARCELLO

I didn't blow it. The old man's dead, isn't he?

REY

I didn't want him dead, I wanted him murdered.

MARCELLO

What's the difference? Dead is dead. What was I supposed to do, strangle the old man in the middle of a heart attack?

Rey leans close. Winces at Marcello's breath.

REY

The difference is I've got the old man's whore and two psychics doing Voodoo on my ass.

MARCELLO

She's not a whore. Mercedes is not a whore.

REY

Oh, sorry. I forgot, she's family.

MARCELLO

That's right.

REY

Family's important, isn't it, Marcello?

MARCELLO

It is. But I'm not going to jail for you, Half-Bro, if that's what you're getting at. I'll take you down with me.

REY

The whole thing was your idea.

MARCELLO

It was a good idea. I thought I was doing Mercedes a favor.

He offers Rey the bottle. Rey checks the label and puts it down.

REY

I don't drink this shit.

He takes out a handkerchief and wipes his hands. Marcello takes a shot.

MARCELLO

This was dad's favorite. Never good enough for you, I suppose.

Rey picks up the bottle and takes a slug.

MARCELLO (CONT'D)

Where is she now?

Rey lights a cigar, takes a long drag.

REY

New Orleans.

Marcello cracks up, coughs and wheezes.

MARCELLO

Hector and Louise -- what a couple of freaks. But let me tell you, Louise was a looker in her day. Mercy gets it from her.

REY

What did she get from you, her moral compass?

MARCELLO

I followed her to Miami, didn't I? I convinced you to give her the damn job.

REY

You're a true saint, Marcello.

MARCELLO

She doesn't even know I'm her father.

REY

You sure about that?

MARCELLO

Positive. Louise swore she'd never tell, and Hector's too stupid to figure it out.

Marcello raises his glass.

MARCELLO (CONT'D)

To Hector and Louise.

He takes another shot.

MARCELLO (CONT'D)
I'm still getting paid, right?

REY
You'll get paid. Just stay put and don't talk to anyone. And don't contact me, no matter what. Can you do that, Marcello? Can you stay put and do nothing?

MARCELLO
I promise you, Half-Bro, I won't do anything but sleep, shit, piss and jerk off.

REY
Dad would be so proud of you.

Rey looks around the apartment. Shakes his head.

REY (CONT'D)
I don't know how you people live like this.

He uses his handkerchief to open the door. Looks both ways, drops it, and steps into a crowded hallway.

INT. CASINO - NIGHT

Frank approaches a CROWD gathered around a stage.

In the center, Mercy dances sensuously.

Frank shoves his way to the front. Climbs up. Tries to pull her away.

FRANK
Come on, let's go. You're out of control -

He notices his wallet on the floor. Picks it up.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You took my wallet?

MERCY
Yes! Isn't it wonderful?

She tries to get Frank to dance with her. He opens the wallet.

FRANK

What happened to the cash? Did you buy anything?

MERCY

Oh Yes!

FRANK

Great. I had three hundred dollars in there.

MERCY

Three hundred and twenty two dollars.

FRANK

Even better.

MERCY

And three credit cards.

FRANK

You used a credit card?

MERCY

No, silly, I used three credit cards. Come on, Franky, dance with me.

FRANK

Are you serious? What do you mean you used them?

MERCY

I got cash advances and bought a bunch of wonderful chips.

FRANK

No way. I had a hundred thousand dollars in credit.

MERCY

A hundred and twelve thousand dollars.

Frank stops her from dancing. The crowd boos.

FRANK

How? You don't know my password.

MERCY

I guessed it. Peeping Tom.

FRANK
Shit. I can't believe this.

MERCY
I won a lot of money, Franky. A lot
of money. Big, big money.

FRANK
You did?

MERCY
Mm hmm.

She moves close and kisses him.

FRANK
Really? A lot of money?

MERCY
Mm hmm.

FRANK
That's...that's great.

Frank kisses her. The crowd claps.

MERCY
And then I lost it all.

FRANK
What? You lost it all?

Mercy nods.

MERCY
Do you have any more?

FRANK
Do I...?! Holy shit! Come on.

Frank drags her offstage.

INT. MERCY'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The door flies open. Frank drags Mercy inside. She's guzzling
a root beer.

FRANK
Three credit cards! Not one. Not
two. Three! A hundred and twelve
thousand dollars down the drain.
Like it never existed.

MERCY

I said I was sorry.

FRANK

Oh, and don't forget the three hundred twenty two dollars in cash.

MERCY

I said I'd pay you back.

FRANK

When?

MERCY

When I get control of the Bank.

FRANK

If you get control.

MERCY

I will. It's in Donald's Will.

FRANK

It takes time. And lawyers. Rey Barrio could box you in and sell the Bank out from under you. He cut off your credit cards, you know. He's telling everyone you're psychotic. He's got police on payroll. You could end up on a gurney in a mental institution with electrodes taped to your shaved skull.

MERCY

But you'll burst in and karate chop the bad guys and help me escape. You'll do that, won't you?

FRANK

You might have to escape by yourself.

Mercy plops down on the bed.

MERCY

That's why I can't drink. You should have known.

FRANK

Oh, it's all my fault.

MERCY

Yeah. Didn't Peeping Tom tell you I do crazy shit when I drink?

FRANK

Bastard didn't say a word.

MERCY

Well I'm feeling better now. The root beer helps. Thanks.

FRANK

Good thing I won five bucks at the slots.

Frank rummages around the closet for extra blankets and a pillow.

MERCY

I'm glad you're staying with me.

FRANK

I got nowhere else. I had to cancel the other room.

Mercy sensuously reclines on the bed.

MERCY

Donald was a terrific lover.

FRANK

Really? An old guy like that? Even with Viagra, how hard can it get?

MERCY

Hard enough. But it's not about having a hard dick, Frank, it's about having a soft heart. Being loved is an incredible aphrodisiac.

FRANK

I wouldn't know.

She kisses his cheek. He kisses her lips.

They move together. He unbuttons her shirt.

MERCY

I feel so close to you, Frank.

FRANK

Yes, very close.

They kiss passionately.

She knees him in the groin. Sends him crashing to the floor.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Fuck!

MERCY

You're the one! You murdered
Donald!

Frank gets up, holding his groin.

FRANK

What? Are you insane?

MERCY

Esmeralda said the murderer was
someone close.

FRANK

I never murdered anyone. That's
crazy.

MERCY

Just get out!

FRANK

Calm down, we can talk --

MERCY

No, you're lying! You've been lying
the whole time. You think I can't
tell? I know people, Frank. I don't
need Peeping Shit. I know you're a
liar. Now get out. I'll call
security.

FRANK

Okay, okay.

Frank scrambles to put on his shoes.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You're right, Mercy, I have been
lying. You want the truth? Here's
the truth: Your sweet, Precious
Donald was a crook. He was stealing
from the Bank. I discovered it and
told Rey Barrio. Turns out Rey's a
bigger crook than Donald.

MERCY

Is that so?

FRANK

Yes, that's so. Rey wanted us to confront him with the evidence and force him to sign over his shares. Then when the merger goes through, Rey makes a huge fortune.

MERCY

And you?

FRANK

I make a small fortune.

He throws a blanket around his shoulders.

MERCY

That's a really bad plan, Frank. Donald never let anyone bully him.

FRANK

He wouldn't have had a choice. Rey would have exposed him and thrown his ass in jail. It was a good plan. But then he runs off and elopes with you. Rey figures that's even better. Now he's got an extra motivation to steal, you know, to keep his new bride in diamonds and furs. Rey had it all worked out. Then Donald goes and dies before we have a chance to put the screws to him.

MERCY

I see. So where does that leave us? Whose side are you on now?

Frank goes to the door.

FRANK

I made a deal with Rey. I don't know how to break it, without him breaking me.

MERCY

Well then let me break this to you: Rey confronted Donald weeks ago. Guess he forgot to tell you.

FRANK

What? No. No way.

MERCY

Yeah. Rey threatened to expose him if he didn't sign over everything.

FRANK

I don't believe you.

MERCY

Donald laughed in Rey's face and told him to fuck off.

FRANK

Rey has the goods on him.

MERCY

Donald has pictures of Rey doing things that would make Peeping Tom blush. Disgusting.

FRANK

Damn it to hell. What kind of game is Rey playing? I don't know if I'm winning or losing.

MERCY

You're losing, Frank. Now get out.

FRANK

Damn. Mercy, I'm not like Rey. Or Donald. Give me a chance, huh?

MERCY

I don't know, Frank. Maybe you killed Donald, maybe you didn't. Maybe it was Rey, or Marcello, or someone else. Maybe you're planning to kill me. I just don't know.

FRANK

That's crazy. I got no cash, thank you -- no credit cards, thank you -- no place to stay, thank you -- but fine, I'll leave if you want me to.

He opens the door and looks back. Puts on a harmless face.

MERCY

What about the key?

Frank reaches into his coat pocket.

FRANK

Sure, no problem. Just think about, maybe, letting me stay? I swear, Mercy, I'm not a killer. I don't even own a --

He pulls out Hector's gun. Mercy screams.

FRANK (CONT'D)

No, Mercy -- this is Hector's...

She burrows under the covers.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Mercy, I'm not going to kill you. I can't believe I'm even saying that.

No answer.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Well, goodbye then. I guess I'll see you in the morning.

He steps into the

HALLWAY

and sits with his back to the door.

FRANK

(quietly)

If I don't kill you first.

EXT. HALLWAY - MORNING

The door opens -- Frank tumbles backward into the Hotel Room.

MERCY

(with an apologetic smile)

I'm sorry I freaked out last night. I guess I just needed a good night's sleep.

Frank brushes past her.

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY

Frank is taking a shower. Mercy talks to him through the curtain.

MERCY

Frank?

FRANK

What!

MERCY

I want to tell you something.

Frank pokes his head around the curtain.

FRANK

What!

Mercy opens her robe. Lets it fall.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Oh. Good to know.

Mercy steps into the shower. They kiss. Frank reaches around and slaps her ass.

MERCY

Ow, stop that!

FRANK

Really? Peeping Tom suggested you like to get spanked.

MERCY

I don't.

FRANK

Well that's really embarrassing.

Mercy crosses her arms and turns away.

FRANK (CONT'D)

So, should I make the water a whole lot colder or can we start over?

(pauses)

I promise to give it to you nice and soft, the way you like it.

Mercy turns.

MERCY

You promise?

FRANK

Cross my heart.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Nadine sits on Detective Lacker's desk as Dortehea enters, carrying a tray with burgers, a cupcakes and a candle.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Ah, lunch -- good, I'm so famished
I could eat a headless goat.

DORTHEA
How'd you know, we're having
headless goat burgers?

Nadine starts to leave.

DORTHEA (CONT'D)
(to Nadine)
Hi. I'm Dortehea.

NADINE
I know. We met once, a long time
ago.

DORTHEA
I remember you.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Nadine is a Psychic Detective.

DORTHEA
Oh, I love that show.

NADINE
Me too.

DORTHEA
Is it pretty accurate?

NADINE
Pretty much. Except, I don't always
solve the crime. Or sometimes I
figure it out too late.

DORTHEA
Like with my mom?

NADINE
Yes, like with your mom.

Dortehea hands her father a burger. Offers one to Nadine.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Thanks, but I can't eat hamburgers. When I chew the meat I experience the cow's panic as it's about to be slaughtered.

Detective Lacker swallows hard. Puts down the burger. Picks up a french fry.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Do potatoes feel pain?

Nadine takes the french fry out of his hand and pops it in her mouth.

NADINE

Only when you bite them.

Dorthea puts the candle in the cupcake.

NADINE (CONT'D)

I'm impressed, Detective. I didn't think you were the kind of man who went all out for your birthday.

DORTHEA

Nadine's right, papa. Why don't we go out and have a nice lunch? It is your birthday. Nadine can join us.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Okay, I'm sure we can find her something tasty that didn't die screaming in fear.

Nadine almost smiles.

NADINE

I'm sorry. I don't mean to be so...fierce...all the time.

Marcello tiptoes to the doorway. Politely waits.

They don't notice him.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Look, this clown Marcello is going to be here any second. Feel free to be as fierce as you want. You can rip him to shreds and stomp his bones into the dust. Then we'll grab some lunch.

Marcello clears his throat.

MARCELLO

I don't want any trouble, boss.

Detective Lacker gives him a big smile.

DETECTIVE LACKER

No, no trouble at all, come in,
come in.

Dorthea notices the pack of cigarettes in Marcello's pocket.

DORTHEA

Can I borrow a match?

Marcello digs into his pocket. Hands her a pack.

MARCELLO

Here you go, honey. Keep it. No
charge, ha ha.

She takes the matches.

DORTHEA

Uh, thanks.

He smiles at her, then looks at Detective Lacker and Nadine.
Loses the smile.

Dorthea grabs the tray and leaves.

Detective Lacker walks over to shake Marcello's hand.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Appreciate your cooperation, sir.

MARCELLO

Sure, no bother. No bother at all.

He casts a wary eye at Nadine.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Please, have a seat.

Marcello sits. Grips the chair.

Nadine slides off the credenza. Stands over him.

MARCELLO

I've stayed out of trouble for
years, Detective. I don't know why
I'm here. I keep my nose clean.

NADINE

That's wonderful, Marcello. Good hygiene is so important these days, isn't it?

MARCELLO

Yes ma'am. I...I should probably pay more attention to that in the future.

He grins at her.

MARCELLO (CONT'D)

Am I under arrest?

DETECTIVE LACKER

No sir, not at all. I was just hoping you could help clear up a few things.

MARCELLO

Like?

DETECTIVE LACKER

Like Donald Turner, for instance. Does that name ring a bell?

Marcello ponders the question.

MARCELLO

Donald Turner...Donald Turner...yes, I...uh...I read about him in the newspaper. A banker, right? Died of a heart attack about two weeks ago.

NADINE

I'm impressed. Do you always read the local news?

MARCELLO

Yeah, I do. And I read the comics and the obituaries and I do the crossword puzzle.

(to Detective Lacker)

Is that a crime?

DETECTIVE LACKER

No, it's commendable. His widow -- Mercedes Turner.

MARCELLO

Yes?

DETECTIVE LACKER
Do you know her?

MARCELLO
No, no sir, I don't believe I do.

DETECTIVE LACKER
I see.

NADINE
Her maiden name is LaBlanc.
Mercedes LaBlanc.

MARCELLO
Oh, sure, Mercedes. I didn't put
two and two together.

DETECTIVE LACKER
That's all we're trying to do, sir.

MARCELLO
Right. Mercedes is the, uh,
daughter of a former business
associate. Haven't seen her in
years. Nice girl. Is she all right?

DETECTIVE LACKER
She's fine. Grieving, of course.

MARCELLO
Yeah, sure, who wouldn't be? Losing
a husband and all.

They stare at him. He starts to squirm.

MARCELLO (CONT'D)
I'll have to look her up, send my
condolences.

DETECTIVE LACKER
You have a brother, Marcello?

MARCELLO
Half brother. But we don't get
along. Haven't seen him in years.
How's he doing?

DETECTIVE LACKER
Quite well. Did you know he worked
for Donald Turner?

MARCELLO

No. Like I said, we haven't talked
in years.

NADINE

That's a real crime, isn't it?

MARCELLO

What?

NADINE

When family doesn't get along.

MARCELLO

I guess so. I don't lose sleep over
it. Is there anything else,
Detective?

DETECTIVE LACKER

No, we're good for now. We'll let
you know if we have any use for
you.

MARCELLO

Well if you do...

DETECTIVE LACKER

We know exactly where to find you.

Marcello stands up. Backs to the door. Turns around and
hurries down the hallway.

DETECTIVE LACKER (CONT'D)

What do you think?

NADINE

(holds up her gloved
hands)

I'd love to get my hands on him.

Detective Lacker makes a fist and smacks his palm.

DETECTIVE LACKER

So would I.

NADINE

You're such a Neanderthal.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Yeah, I know. Come on, let's get
Dorthea and grab some lunch.

(MORE)

DETECTIVE LACKER (CONT'D)

There's a mediocre but cheap
Chinese restaurant across the
street.

NADINE

Maybe it's better if I don't go. So
you can spend time with your
daughter.

She starts to leave. Detective Lacker eyes her body. Checks
his pulse.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Damn!

Nadine turns around.

NADINE

What?

DETECTIVE LACKER

My pulse is way too high.

NADINE

Maybe you better take a pill.

DETECTIVE LACKER

(suggestively)

They don't make a pill for what I
need.

Nadine gets flustered.

DETECTIVE LACKER (CONT'D)

You're joining us, okay? Unless
you're chicken.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Dorthea coaxes Nadine into eating a piece of chicken. She
flaps her arms and pretends to cluck. Everyone laughs.

Detective Lacker looks through the restaurant window. Nadine
sees it too. Across the street, an old car enters the parking
lot.

Marcello parks and gets out. He enters Turner Bank.

INT. DONALD TURNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Still decorated in post-mortem Donald Turner.

The door opens slightly. Marcello squeezes inside.

REY

What are you doing here?! You moron. What did I tell you?

MARCELLO

You swore no cops, Rey. No cops! You know who called me? The cops. Big surprise.

REY

What did you tell them?

MARCELLO

Nothing.

He looks out the window. Watches a Jaguar pulls into the parking lot.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Through the window, Detective Lacker and Nadine watch a Jaguar pull into the parking lot.

INT. DONALD TURNER'S OFFICE - DAY

MARCELLO

I'm not going to jail, Rey -- not without you.

REY

No one's going to jail. You didn't do anything, moron. You didn't murder anyone.

Marcello doesn't answer.

REY (CONT'D)

Right?

MARCELLO

Right.

(pauses)

Depends how you define murder.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Detective Lacker calls for the check.

The waiter arrives with a small cake and a candle.

WAITER

I'll be right back with some matches.

DORTHEA

That's okay, I still got the matches that weird man gave me.

She opens her purse and reaches in.

NADINE

Wait! Can I take them out, honey?

Nadine removes one glove and reaches in. Her bare hand touches the matchbook.

NADINE'S VISION

INT - DONALD TURNER'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Donald Turner clutches his left arm and falls back into his chair.

He jabs the numbers: Nine (pause) One (pause) One...

Marcello snatches the phone out of his hand and slams it. Knocks the SKULL TOP PEN onto the carpet.

He stands there, smirking.

Donald Turner slumps into his seat.

END NADINE'S VISION

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - DAY

Nadine drops the matchbook and slumps into her chair.

DORTHEA

What did you see? Did you have a vision?

Detective Lacker comes around. Holds a glass of water to her mouth.

Nadine takes a sip, then bolts upright.

NADINE

We have to go!

DETECTIVE LACKER

Okay.

NADINE

It was Marcello.

Dorthea gets up.

DETECTIVE LACKER

No. You stay here, I'll come back
for you.

DORTHEA

Be careful.

Detective Lacker and Nadine rush out of the restaurant.

INT. LOBBY - TURNER BANK - DAY

Esmeralda opens the door and staggers inside.

Carlos blocks her way.

CARLOS

You again?

ESMERALDA

(with a deep, manly
inflection)

Out of my way, Carlos, unless you
want the whole world to know about
your faggot boyfriend.

Carlos backs off. Watches as Esmeralda grunts and mumbles her
way through the lobby.

She stops and clutches her stomach.

ESMERALDA (CONT'D)

Shit!

She veers off and opens the door the bathroom.

INT. DONALD TURNER'S OFFICE - DAY

Marcello kicks the door shut. He grabs Rey's collar.

MARCELLO

You think I'm some kind of low
life, don't you?

(MORE)

MARCELLO (CONT'D)

But you're just like me, Rey.
You're me, with money.

REY

I'm you with brains. Now get off
me, your breath stinks.

Rey breaks his grip and pushes him away. He takes out a handkerchief and wipes his hands.

REY (CONT'D)

Don't panic. There's no proof. No
proof, no murder.

MARCELLO

I need my money, Rey. I got to get
out of town.

REY

You'll get your money when I get my
money.

MERCY (O.C.)

Don't you mean *my* money?

Standing inside the Office: Mercy and Frank.

MERCY (CONT'D)

You! You killed him, didn't you!

MARCELLO

Not exactly.

Mercy goes to the bookshelf and starts yanking off books.

FRANK

I told her everything, Rey.

REY

I doubt it, Frank. You don't know
everything.

FRANK

Whatever. You owe me a hundred and
twelve thousand, three hundred and
twenty two dollars.

REY

For what?

FRANK

My credit card bill. Don't worry, I
got the receipts.

(MORE)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Except for the three hundred and twenty two dollars in cash. You'll have to trust me on that one.

REY

You're out of your mind...

MERCY

Got it!

She takes out a handgun and points it at Marcello.

MARCELLO

Wait, wait. I did not give your husband a heart attack. Besides, Rey put me up to it.

REY

You can't prove anything.

FRANK

(to Marcello)

Will you testify in court?

MARCELLO

Absolutely. Mercy, please, you have to understand, all my life I tried to protect you.

MERCY

Nice job, Marcello.

MARCELLO

Hey, I tried. Every time Hector beat you it broke my heart.

REY

Jesus, you are a piece of work. Go ahead and pull the trigger, Mercy. He deserves it.

MERCY

Yes, he does.

She moves the gun from Marcello to Rey.

DETECTIVE LACKER (O.C.)

Put the gun down, Mrs. Turner.

Detective Lacker and Nadine block the doorway.

NADINE

He's not worth it, Mercy.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Let the law handle this.

MARCELLO
Handle what? She doesn't have any
proof. No proof, no crime.

Mercy moves the gun back to Marcello.

MERCY
I don't need proof, I got a gun.

MARCELLO
You wouldn't shoot your father,
would you?

MERCY
I would. But he's not here.

FRANK
Turns out Hector wasn't shooting
blanks.

At that moment, Hector barrels into the room, shoving
Detective Lacker and Nadine aside.

HECTOR
You got that right.

He whips out a gun and aims it at Marcello.

MERCY
Daddy, no!

He blasts Marcello. Marcello hits the floor.

Detective Lacker twists the gun out of Hector's hand. Bashes
him unconscious.

Mercy aims her gun at Rey.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Put down the gun, Mrs. Turner.

REY
Don't worry, Detective, she's not
that stupid. She a smart, crafty
little girl with a lot of money at
stake. What do you think, Frank?
What would Peeping Tom say?

FRANK

Peeping Tom's learned to keep his mouth shut.

MERCY

You're right about one thing, Rey, there's no proof. Especially without Marcello. No witness. No evidence. If I don't kill you, you'll get away with murder.

Rey starts moving toward her.

REY

If you kill me, you blow your entire fortune. You'll end up broke and in prison for the rest of your life.

Mercy cocks the gun.

MERCY

I loved Donald.

REY

I believe you.

Mercy lowers the gun.

Esmeralda suddenly hobbles through the door. In one swift motion she snatches the gun from Mercy's hand.

ESMERALDA

My beautiful peach.

Then she points the gun at Rey and fires.

Rey staggers back and sits on the desk. He grabs a handkerchief and dabs at his blood-stained chest.

REY

I don't know how you people live like this.

He slumps over and falls to the floor.

Esmeralda lets out a triumphant laugh. Points the gun at Mercy.

ESMERALDA

Come with me, Mercy. We can be together forever.

Detective Lacker points his gun at Esmeralda.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Drop it now or I'll fire.

ESMERALDA
I'm already dead, you nitwit.

Mercy signals Detective Lacker to wait and approaches Esmeralda.

MERCY
We only said until death do us
part, my love.

ESMERALDA
No. I'll take care of you -
forever.

MERCY
No, baby. I can take care of
myself. For now.

She takes out the SKULL TOP PEN. Click on the flashing eyes.

ESMERALDA
Goodbye, my little peach.

Mercy jabs the pen into Esmeralda's arm.

Esmeralda screams. Drops the gun.

Detective Lacker picks it up.

Esmeralda -- herself -- takes in the scene. Lets out a sigh of relief.

ESMERALDA (CONT'D)
Ah, back to normal.

Sirens begin to wail.

EXT. TURNER BANK - DAY

In a series of quick scenes:

Two body bags are zipped up and carried out.

Detective Lacker shoves Hector and Esmeralda into the back of a police car.

Nadine takes Dorthea.

Mercy and Frank get in the Jaguar.

INT. POLICE CAR - MOVING - DAY

Detective Lacker driving.

Esmeralda leans forward.

ESMERALDA
Sir? Sir?

DETECTIVE LACKER
What?

ESMERALDA
Put on some Jazz.

DETECTIVE LACKER
What? Jazz?

ESMERALDA
A Jazz station.

Detective Lacker turns the radio on. Tunes it to a Jazz station.

ESMERALDA (CONT'D)
I want you to know, it wasn't me. I didn't kill anyone.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Right. Why should I believe my own eyes?

ESMERALDA
Your eyes only saw my outside. It was all Donald Turner inside. Donald Turner killed that man.

DETECTIVE LACKER
Maybe so. If you figure out how to subpoena a dead man, let me know.

Esmeralda sits back. Hector leans forward.

HECTOR
Detective?

DETECTIVE LACKER
What?

HECTOR

Do you have any idea how much it costs to kill a lowlife like Marcello?

Detective Lacker pops open a pill box.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

Dorthea and Nadine help Detective Lacker toss a few odds and ends into a large box.

DORTHEA

I never thought you'd actually do it.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Neither did I.

NADINE

What made you change your mind?

DETECTIVE LACKER

A couple of dead bodies. A police report that reads like an episode of the Twilight Zone.

NADINE

Can I be in touch?

DETECTIVE LACKER

Sure. I'll be at the Bank.

Nadine moves closer to Detective Lacker. Dorthea glances at Nadine.

DORTHEA

Bathroom. Be right back.

DETECTIVE LACKER

Wait, um...

NADINE

Can I be in touch?

Detective Lacker slows his packing.

NADINE (CONT'D)

Can I be in touch?

He stops and looks at her.

DETECTIVE LACKER

I could use a little help finding a
missing body part.

Nadine removes a glove. Touches his pulse with her fingers.

INT. BANK VAULT - DAY

Frank punches numbers into a security box. It beeps yellow.

FRANK

This is insane, Mercy. Seriously
cracked.

Mercy punches in a set of numbers. It beeps green.

MERCY

Duly noted, Frank.

The door opens. Mercy enter the vault.

Frank gives Mercy an expression of disbelief.

FRANK

Is there any way I can talk you out
of this?

MERCY (O.C.)

Shut the door, Frank.

Frank hesitates, then shuts the door.

INT. BANK VAULT - DAY

With a wicked smile, Mercy begins to remove her clothes.

FADE OUT.