

HOLLYWOOD & VINE

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FADE IN

An empty screen ... an empty sky ... a pale cerulean sea.
Fingerlets of land in the water: dark, insubstantial smears.

THEN:

A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION

Breathtaking. Terrifying. The islands are vaporized. A
towering mushroom cloud blooms.

IMAGE GOES B&W:

An atomic test. Newsreel footage on A TELEVISION SCREEN. On
a BUNCH of new CONSOLE TELEVISIONS stacked in a store window
display.

GUY RUNYAN stands outside staring in at the televisions. His
face a transparent reflection.

WE ARE:

LOS ANGELES, 1954

EXT. NICHOLSON'S APPLIANCES - DAY

Scratchy narration over a sidewalk P.A. speaker:

NARRATOR

*... a thousand times more powerful than
the a-bomb dropped on Hiroshima ...*

Runyan is handsome, but not pretty; cool but not cold;
youthful, but not callow; smart but not shrewd enough to
avoid the trouble that invariably finds him. Dove grey suit,
stark black tie. The kind of guy you'd want your daughter to
fall in love with ... but not marry.

Runyan turns his back on the bomb. A YOUNG MOTHER with a
baby in a carriage, transfixed by the television screens,
tears streaming down her face.

YOUNG MOTHER

What have they done?

RUNYAN

Even they don't know, ma'am.

Runyan gives her his handkerchief. Tips his hat, walks away.

EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - DAY

Pace's newsstand, Humphrey Bakery, Chinese Kitchen, HAL'S
COFFEE and LEONG'S FRESH PRODUCE.

RUNYAN

Have you noticed how television makes everything the same size?

RUNYAN

on the counter corner at Hal's, drinking coffee black and reading the front page of the Daily News.

RUNYAN

Eisenhower and Howdy Doody. Ed Sullivan and thermonuclear war.

Headlines: "H-BOMB TEST ON BIKINI ATOLL," "MCCARTHY CLAIMS ARMY GENERAL "UNFIT" FOR UNIFORM," "V.P. NIXON SAYS VIETNAM INTERVENTION UNLIKELY ..." HAL, round, apron and cook's cap, Navy tattoos on both forearms, refills Runyan's cup:

HAL

What are you on about now?

RUNYAN

I was watching the h-bomb test in the window at Nicholson's -- doomsday weapon, a thousand times more powerful than the one we dropped on Hiroshima -- but on the t.v.? It's no bigger than the lather coming off two tablets of Alka-Seltzer.

Hal just stares at him.

RUNYAN

Plop plop, fizz fizz.

Lanky greengrocer JOHNNY LEONG crosses from where his WIFE is stacking "Valley Fresh" GRAPEFRUIT. Leong drops scraps of messages in front of Runyan, all scrawled in Chinese.

LEONG

Not many calls for you, Guy Runyan. You should advertise. Get on the stick.

RUNYAN

Your wife has nice handwriting, Johnny, but I don't read Chinese.

Runyan holds up the first one. Leong puts on his glasses:

LEONG

Screen Gems. They have an actor who has got himself in a scrape --

RUNYAN

No movie studios. I made a rule.

Runyan crumples it up. Next:

LEONG
Jimmy Del Rio called.

RUNYAN
The divorce lawyer? Categorically no.

Runyan crumples it. Beat. Another:

LEONG
Lost cat. Some little girl's pet. You
have rules for cats?

RUNYAN
Any reward offered?

LEONG
(scowls)
Mercenary.

Runyan smiles, pockets this one. The last message is written
in English. Beautiful cursive.

LEONG
That one came here, looking for you. I
wrote down the information.
(as Runyan reads it:)
Attractive lady. Long of leg.

Runyan stares at an address --

CUT TO:

EXT. SILVERLAKE - DAY

Runyan's black MORRIS MINOR comes around a shady curve and
slides to the curb in front of a Spanish courtyard sixplex.
"Diablo Bonita Apartments."

Runyan checks the address against Johnny Leong's note, then
walks up the flagstone steps --

EXT. COURTYARD - DIABLO BONITA APTS. - CONTINUOUS

Bubbling fountain, tropical planters.

A lithe, ASPIRING ACTRESS sulky on a lounge, platinum hair
splayed out, two-piece sea-foam bathing suit with rocket-cone
padding she doesn't really need, and a sun-reflecting mirror
tucked under her chin.

Big rhinestone-studded cats-eye sunglasses follow Runyan
appreciatively as he walks to the apartment in the back.

ACTRESS
Hey, Fuller Brush man. Where's my gift?

Runyan stops at the door. Thumb poised above the doorbell. He looks back at the actress. She smiles, lots of teeth.

THE FRONT DOOR

creaks slightly, in the breeze. Not completely closed, behind the screen door.

Runyan pushes the former, and it swings open --

INT. APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Mid-century modern, with a female bent. The apartment is unnaturally well-ordered. No knickknacks on the counters, or tables. Furniture all squared up.

Strange.

He pulls the door shut behind him, walks through. Down a short hallway into:

THE BEDROOM

Everything pristine except for the bed, unmade, tangle of sheets.

A WOMAN is dead on the floor, shot through the chest. She's beautiful.

Runyan stares at her, shaken.

Silence.

He finds a phone by the bed, reaches for his handkerchief, careful of fingerprints -- but he gave that away.

Moves to the bathroom door, for a towel to lift the receiver. Opens the door --

INT. BATHROOM

Three POLICEMEN and a DETECTIVE, HENRY PAEZ, stand staring back at him. Round, cynical, third generation *Angeleno*. Maybe he and Runyan used to be friends. Maybe Runyan made LAPD look foolish not so long ago, and Paez took the flack. They don't talk about it. But it haunts them both.

RUNYAN

'Lo Henry.

PAEZ

What are you doing here, Runyan?

Runyan steps back and the cops come out, sheepish.

RUNYAN

New departmental policy on urination,
Detective, or you just got more equipment
than one man can handle?

PAEZ

Don't be a weisenheimer. We got an
anonymous call --

RUNYAN

Shots fired?

PAEZ

No. Just a tip. We were barely started,
heard you come up the steps and wondered
who it could be. Did you know her?

RUNYAN

Prospective client. She left a message,
I came at the appointment time. I don't
even know what she wanted.

PAEZ

That's not what I asked. I asked did you
know her?

A long beat.

RUNYAN

Yeah.

A longer beat.

RUNYAN

She's my wife.

Paez is suitably stunned.

PAEZ

You never told me you were married.

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

CREDITS ROLL.

L.A., mid-century. Snapshots and archive footage. Drifters,
dreamers, starlets, fast money and fancy cars. Palm trees
and blue skies. Dark secrets and impossible dreams. Queen
of Angels:

FAT CITY

FADE OUT.

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. COURTYARD - DIABLO BONITA APTS. - DAY

Front steps, Runyan and Paez, and another DETECTIVE who just takes notes, his hat cocked back. Cops going in and out.

PAEZ
How long?

RUNYAN
Eleven years, in August.

Paez whistles.

PAEZ
Holy mackerel. How long since you'd seen her?

RUNYAN
I don't know. Seven.

PAEZ
Seven. Years?

RUNYAN
(shrugs)
I got busy. Time flies.

PAEZ
You didn't divorce her, she didn't ask for one?

Beat.

RUNYAN
It's a long story, not ... relevant.

PAEZ
Relevant to what? This? Somebody shooting her? Guess what? You do not get to decide what is or is not relevant to a homicide, Guy --

RUNYAN
What happened to you? You used to be a good guy, now you're a dick.

PAEZ
I was always a dick. I just hadn't made Sergeant yet.

RUNYAN
How about I save us both some time, here, Henry. You're gonna ask me if I have any
(MORE)

RUNYAN (CONT'D)
 idea who might want her dead, and I'm gonna tell you I don't even know who she is anymore -- you'll imply I'm a suspect on account of maybe she threw me over and I got jealous, I can tell you where to put that idea, and maybe we'll circle that like a couple of bantam roosters but it won't get us anywhere -- so eventually you'll tell me 'stay in town and out of my investigation, Runyan' and I can swear to you -- swear to you -- that I have no interest in solving this one.

Beat.

PAEZ
 No interest in solving your own wife's murder.

RUNYAN
 Nope.

Paez starts to turn away --

RUNYAN
 But if I was, I'd start with the guy she was sleeping with.

PAEZ
 I thought you said you didn't --

RUNYAN
 Dents. On either side of the bed.
 (off Paez)
 Go check. I'll wait.

INT. BEDROOM

The body covered with a sheet. A CRIME PHOTOGRAPHER shoots the room. Paez looks at the unmade bed: sure enough: human sized DENTS under the swirl of covers, side by side.

EXT. COURTYARD - DIABLO BONITA APTS. - MOMENTS LATER

Paez comes out, putting his sunglasses on.

PAEZ
 Now you're seeing dents.

RUNYAN
 (shrugs)
 Or snow angels. Take your pick.

PAEZ
 So who was she sleeping with?

Runyan shrugs: no idea. Jams his hands in his pockets and starts walking back to the street.

PAEZ

It never snows in L.A.

RUNYAN

Yeah, well ... it sure gets cold enough.

The actress, on her porch, in a lacy swim-cover now, tilts sunglasses down and idly follows Runyan out with her eyes.

EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS

Runyan gets back into his Morris, puts the key in the ignition. But just sits, staring out at nothing. Closes his eyes. And breathes.

Opens them again --

RUNYAN'S P.O.V. - DOWN THE STREET

A two-tone DeSoto, with a handsome man behind the wheel, just staring out at the activity in front of the Diablo Bonita. (This man, we will come to learn, is PEARSON).

He locks eyes with Runyan, realizes he's been made, and starts his car. Pulls out from the curb and makes a u-turn in front of Runyan --

WIDE - STREET - CONTINUOUS

Runyan's Morris starts to follow him, but --

A BIG BLACK SEDAN

cuts him off from a sidestreet. SCREECHES to a stop blocking the way, and a white guy in a dark suit and aviator glasses (LIME) barks:

LIME

Why dontcha watch where you're going next time?!

By the time they back-up and untangle, the DeSoto is gone. Runyan watches the sedan in his rear-view mirror. Notes the U.S. GOVERNMENT license plates ...

CUT TO:

EXT. V.A. HOSPITAL - WESTWOOD - DAY

Runyan's Morris cruises between bleached block buildings.

INT. V.A. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR

Runyan's shoes clicking on newly waxed tile. Past a KOREAN WAR VET in a wheelchair, arms amputated, a futile pack of cigarettes and a lighter in his lap.

WAR VET
Got ya knock-knock joke, Kilroy.

Runyan stops, comes back, shakes a cigarette out of the pack, puts it in the man's mouth and flicks the lighter.

WAR VET
Nucular rib-tickler.

RUNYAN
Go.

WAR VET
Knock-knock.

RUNYAN
Who's there?

The veteran says nothing. Just stares and smokes.

WAR VET
Get it?

RUNYAN
(nods)
Yeah, I get it.

Runyan puts the cigarettes and lighter back on the Vet's lap, and keeps walking.

WAR VET
Nuthin! No answer! Gonesville ...

INT. PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

A man Runyan's age (LONNIE DALE) at a desk, typing laboriously, his back to the doorway that Runyan enters.

RUNYAN
There's whole species that evolve faster than you can type, Lonnie.

LONNIE
A-a-and, tragically, you're not a m-member of any of them.

The typewriter is odd: six keys, a palm-sized face bar. The PERKINS BRAILLER. A sheaf of blank pages with little dots pressed into them is neatly stacked next to it.

RUNYAN
Still like your Heaven Hill rye?

Lonnie turns to face Runyan. He's blind. Big SCAR slashed across his once-beautiful face, more or less horizontally. And it's like his brain has a couple parts missing. The stutter, the loops. Just slightly off:

LONNIE

I stopped drinking in '49. They said it would help with my memory. Maybe it did, I can't remember.

He smiles, crooked. An awkward beat. Runyan has the flask-bottle halfway out of his coat pocket. Starts to push it back in, but:

LONNIE

Go ahead put that pint on the bureau, though. I'll try to bribe my nurse with it, maybe get an extra s-sponge bath.

Runyan puts the bottle on the dresser. Brush, comb, sundries all lined up so Lonnie knows where they are.

LONNIE

I heard you were back. Three years ago. Guess you forgot how to g-get here.

RUNYAN

Look, Lonnie, I know --

LONNIE

(talks over him)

I heard you were a private dick, too, which kind of makes sense, I guess, for a guy who never runs out of questions --

Turning back, Runyan catches Lonnie awkwardly stuffing something into the top drawer of the desk.

LONNIE

-- what do you want, is my question. Three years and nothing, then, all of a sudden here you are with a b-b-bottle of booze. Gets me wondering --

RUNYAN

Georgia's dead.

Silence. Lonnie's face collapses.

RUNYAN

Shot through the heart.

LONNIE

Oh God when?

RUNYAN

I don't know. Last night? I found her in her apartment this morning. Cops were there.

Tears fall from Lonnie's ruined eyes. Overwhelmed:

LONNIE

Why would somebody want to kill Georgia? She's a saint.

RUNYAN

She wanted to see me, Ronnie, but I don't know what about. Do you?

LONNIE

We split up. Six months ago. I haven't seen her since.

Runyan studies Lonnie for a beat. Knows he's not telling the whole truth. Runyan crosses to the desk. Lonnie following the sound of him with his dead eyes:

RUNYAN

Your idea or hers?

LONNIE

Let's call it mutual consent.

RUNYAN

Let's not call it anything -- let's tell it to me straight. Or does she just keep her furniture all nice and lined up for old times' sake?

LONNIE

I'm damaged goods. She moved on, Runyan. Just like she did with you.

A silence that cuts deep. These guys have a tangled past.

RUNYAN

No, I think what happened with me was a one-time deal.

Runyan reaches down and silently works the desk drawer open to see what Lonnie stowed inside it, as:

LONNIE

We didn't mean for it to happen. And you could of --

RUNYAN

-- why was she calling me?

LONNIE

She loved you.

RUNYAN
She loved us both. *Cherchez la femme.*

LONNIE
Oh, knock off the tough talk will ya?

Lonnie gets up, SLAMS the drawer shut, almost snapping Runyan's fingers. He's right in Runyan's face, sightlessly searching for Runyan's eyes.

RUNYAN
I didn't come here to argue about what did or did not happen seven years ago.

LONNIE
Why are you here, then?

RUNYAN
To tell you she's gone. I figured you'd want to know.

Silence.

LONNIE
Just that?

RUNYAN
Yes.

Beat. Ronnie wipes at his eyes with the back of his hand. Voice breaking:

LONNIE
You've got to find out what happened to her, Guy.

RUNYAN
(testy)
Why's everybody so sure I'm interested?

LONNIE
(right back)
Because that's who you are, isn't it?

Another long silence. Softer, sadder. Angry and lost:

LONNIE
That's just who you are. White hat and everything.

Runyan walks out.

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD - DIABLO BONITA APTS. - NIGHT

Warm light glows from the window of the apartment opposite Georgia's: the actress inside, leotard, dancing with an instructor and singing some audition show tune that bleeds soft and lonely over --

RUNYAN

in the shadows at Georgia's front door. Picking the lock. He lets himself in --

INT. GEORGIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

TIGHT - a silver framed wedding photograph of Runyan, Georgia, and their Best Man, Lonnie Dale.

TIGHT - the outline of Georgia's body taped crudely on the bedroom floor. The dry stain of her blood.

TIGHT - under the bed: an empty, velvet-lined box that held a U.S. Army service revolver.

INT. CLOSET - VARIOUSLY

Runyan goes right to the HUGE SHOE-RACK -- he knows where Georgia hides her important stuff. Checking pumps and flats, finding jewelry she's hidden, but not what he wants.

Boots. All empty ... except that Runyan feels a difference in weight in an old pair of riding boots. Reaches in -- confirms it. Turns the boot and shakes it, hard --

OUT TUMBLES a small, locked DIARY, a new PASSPORT, and a FAT WHITE ENVELOPE.

CLICK.

INT. KITCHEN

LIGHT from a desktop gooseneck reveals Runyan, sitting, close, and illuminates the Formica breakfast table Georgia has turned into a desk: typewriter, stack of blank sheets, carbon paper, pencil holder.

Runyan looks in the envelope: THICK STACK OF HUNDRED DOLLAR BILLS. He puts it aside.

The passport is newly-issued. No stamps. A visa for France.

Jimmies the DIARY open. Two yellowing NEWS CLIPPINGS are taped inside the front cover: "SEARCH CONTINUES FOR MISSING PACOIMA GIRL" and "PACOIMA GIRL FOUND DEAD IN DESERT." Yearbook picture of the victim, a pretty SARA MILLER, 17, stares out at us, happy.

Runyan thumbs through the carbon paper. Fresh. There's handbills in the wastebasket. Runyan smooths one out:

CHURCH OF THE COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS.
FAITH IN THE FUTURE
The HON. V.R. BAILY presides.

A o.s. RATTLE in the front door lock. VOICES. Men.

Runyan puts the trash back, drops the diary into the toaster (first yanks the plug out), reaches for the light switch and SEES, on the floor near the back door -- A LONG SMEAR OF BLOOD. As if somebody dragged a body in that way.

O.S. the front door OPENS -- Runyan kills the light.

DARKNESS.

Runyan creeps to the kitchen doorway and peers into the living room as a LIGHT comes on in there --

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

TWO BIG MEN in dark suits (BUDDIGER and JOHNSON) --

BUDDIGER
Twenty thousand bucks cash, she's not gonna carry around in her purse.

JOHNSON
My opinion she's not gonna keep it in her apartment. Is all I'm saying.

INT. KITCHEN - RUNYAN

draws back, watching -- but:

WHAM!

VOICE (LIME)
Gotcha!

A third man -- LIME, the angry guy from the traffic snafu -- is behind him (he's crept in the back door) -- CLUBS Runyan with a crushing forearm and sends him stunned, staggered and sprawling into --

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

-- where Runyan crashes into a lamp -- then the wall -- spins and drops into a boxer's crouch and lashes out as Lime comes in after him --

LIME
Hey look what the cat drug in --

JAB! JAB!

Runyan flattens the third man's nose with two hard jabs -- pivots -- and drives a stiff right hand into the side of Buddiger who rushes to help his friend --

JAB WHAP JAB!

Runyan feinting and punching.

JOHNSON
Hey hey hey hey --

BUDDIGER
Big mistake, buddy --

Runyan wheels, tags him -- but Johnson's got a BADGE out, he's flashing it -- and Lime has a gun pointed at Runyan's face --

LIME
FBI! FBI, pal! Get on the floor!

-- whereupon Buddiger GRABS Runyan in a bear hug and they both go crashing to the floor --

BUDDIGER
Jesus. Who the hell are you?

Cuffs cut into Runyan's wrists.

Agent Buddiger FLOPS Runyan onto his back and the three Feds stare down at him, breathing hard. Agent Lime's nose bleeding and already swelling. Runyan recognizes him.

LIME
What is he doing here? What are you doing here?

He drops the envelope of cash onto Runyan's chest.

LIME
Yours? Where's the rest, huh?

He kicks Runyan. Johnson has Runyan's wallet. Holds up his p.i. license for all to see.

LIME
Snooping?

RUNYAN
Why do the Feds need to come tidy up a murder scene, I wonder? Or run a moving pick for a dandy in a DeSoto?

Buddiger hauls Runyan up by the shirt, PINS him against the wall and studies him.

LIME
Snooper. He's a wise guy. Are you a wise guy?

RUNYAN

Me? No. I'm dumb as dirt. I mean, look at the company I'm keeping.

Johnson hauls off and HITS him, as hard as he can --

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

INT. FEDERAL INTERROGATION ROOM

Runyan handcuffed to the single chair, harsh overhead light, no other furniture but the three Feds are all here. Lime seems to be in charge:

LIME

What were you doing in her apartment?

RUNYAN

She's my wife.

LIME

You broke in.

RUNYAN

I lost my key.

(then)

You want to get some ice on that beak, I'll wait.

Lime HITS him, open handed. Nearly knocks over the chair.

LIME

Don't play dumb with us. We know the score, 'kay? Blackmail, the rocket fuel formula. We've had your wife under surveillance for the past two weeks. We recorded her ransom demand, we watched her pick up the first payment --

RUNYAN

And you didn't see who killed her? You guys are unbelievable.

LIME

Maybe you were in on it, with her. Maybe you're a Red, too? Maybe you killed her to shut her up. And take the plans and the dough for yourself.

RUNYAN

Maybe the moon is made of cheese. What are you --

LIME

Local Fuze Project 602. Heard of it?

Beat.

RUNYAN

(surprising himself)

Yeah. Only now I think it's called Feasibility Study 567, and if you don't know that, anything else I tell you is gonna be way above your pay grade, agent, and next thing we know you'll be sitting here in the hot chair answering one of those prickly "are you now or have you ever been a member of" questions that's ruined more careers than it's unmasked communists. So I'd tread real careful from this point on in.

Lime stares at him: who *is* this guy?

THE DOOR OPENS and a buzz-cut ex-Marine strides in, expensive suit and Buddy Holly glasses: AGENT LOVELY.

LOVELY

What's going on here, gentlemen?

Lime and the others have straightened up; clearly this is somebody they answer to.

RUNYAN

Agent Lime here was just asking me about 567, that top secret rocket program at --

LOVELY

(to Runyan)
Shut up.

LIME

Sir, this man was apprehen --

LOVELY

This man is a former OSS and CIA clandestine, and you do not have the security clearance to be asking him for the time of day. Get out.

The junior agents hesitate --

LOVELY

Out! Go!

As they go past he smacks Lime on the top of the head like he's a little boy. Uncuffs Runyan from the chair as the men shuffle out, and the door clicks shut.

LOVELY

You go ape on my man's nose?

RUNYAN

He tried to break my fist with his face.

Lovely extends his hand.

LOVELY

Ed Lovely. I ran Berlin Bureau while you were off goosing Kraut V-2 rocket engineers away from Stalin.

RUNYAN

(shakes hands)

-- Lovely. I remember. They say you went through the typing pool like a race horse put out to stud.

LOVELY

(laughs)

Yeah, well, one of 'em put a bit in my mouth, threw a saddle on me and rode me home. We've got five half-kraut kids.

He holds the door open for Runyan --

INT. CORRIDOR - FBI FIELD OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

They brush right past the chagrined junior agents.

RUNYAN

What's all this about stolen formulas?

LOVELY

(overlapping, ignores:)

Rumor is you went off-grid right before Operation Ajax, Runyan.

Beat.

RUNYAN

Yeah. Overthrowing a democratically elected government didn't seem American to me, somehow. Look, Lovely, my wife --

LOVELY

(shrugs, dismissive:)

Iran. Bunch of bedouin horn-dogs in search of a stag party. Ten years from now it'll be a division of Standard Oil and the ragheads'll be fat and rich and nobody'll give a camel's butt about it.

RUNYAN

Guy in the DeSoto today -- where does he fit into this?

LOVELY

You were never cut out for the spook life, Runyan. You know why? You asked too many questions. Collected them, connected them. Into stories. Always trying to find sense in what is, truth be told, a senseless world.

RUNYAN

I just wanted to do the right thing.

LOVELY

As if there is such a thing.

INT. LOVELY'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Big picture of Ike, and an American Flag in the corner.

RUNYAN

Ed. My wife thought pinko was an eye condition. You're barking up the wrong --

LOVELY

Wife? Guy. Cards on the table: yours was not the picture of connubial bliss.

RUNYAN

Still. Communist? I think I would know.

Lovely grunts.

RUNYAN

Okay. Supposing you're right. Was she killed because of something she knew, something she had, or something she did?

Beat. Lovely sighs.

LOVELY

That ten grand you found was ours. Extortion bait. Marked. There's another ten still missing. Last week she booked a flight to Europe. It's not a pretty picture for your Georgia, that's all I can say. Let it go. Much as I'd love to tell you, I can't. Okay? I can't.

RUNYAN

Do you know who killed her?

Lovely wags his finger: no, no, no.

LOVELY

What we're gonna do, okay, is leave her murder to the cops, and the rest to the shadows. Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain. You know the drill.

RUNYAN

Yeah, I do. But I'm not getting paid anymore to swallow the bullshit.

He turns to go --

LOVELY

Oh, and Runyan? Her diary? Nothing in there but personal stuff, so. We left it where you hid it.

CUT TO:

INT. GEORGIA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Paez stands in the middle of the living room, calls off into the darkness --

PAEZ

He quoted the Wizard of Oz? Really?

Runyan comes back from the bedroom.

RUNYAN

Gun box isn't under the bed anymore. Her passport's gone. They've cleaned up.

PAEZ

Federales.

RUNYAN

That's right.

PAEZ

Big Red Scare cover-up.

Beat.

RUNYAN

You don't believe anything I've said.

PAEZ

I believe Feds might have roughed you up. You prolly deserved it. And I believe your wife coulda been a Communist and you can't see it cuz you never got over her. Either way? Doesn't concern me.

Frustrated, Runyan goes in the kitchen, flicks the light --

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

The floor where the smear of blood was is spotless.

RUNYAN

There was blood here. Like she was killed somewhere else, and carried in.

PAEZ

Tell me something I don't know, that you can prove. Or I'm going home.

Runyan can't. The breakfast table is all straightened up. Blank sheets of carbon paper. The wastebasket empty.

RUNYAN
You remember a murder, last year, girl named Sara Miller?

Runyan hits the unplugged toaster, and the diary pops out.

PAEZ
Vaguely. Look, much as I hate to admit it, you've had this pegged from square one: it ain't about Reds or Feds --

RUNYAN
Last year. Disappeared, found out near Barstow -- Georgia kept clippings --

He opens the diary. The clippings have been removed. Faint trace of where the tape was. Shit.

RUNYAN
-- the coroner says she was pregnant. Your wife.

RUNYAN
(looks up at Paez)
What?

PAEZ
Yeah. Bun in the oven. 12 weeks.

A long beat. Runyan stares at him.

PAEZ
From where I sit, this murder's about dents in a bed. And dollars to donuts, we find the man who made 'em, we'll find our killer.
(then)
Blood type O.
(pointedly)
What's yours?

RUNYAN
AB positive.

PAEZ
(mirthless grin)
What a shame.

Off Runyan --

FADE OUT.

ACT TWO

SNAP IN:

INT. JAZZ CLUB "FALL-OUT" - CENTRAL AVENUE - NIGHT

A TRUMPET screams. The hep, brightshiny, tiny club is packed. Mid-Century space-age mock-nuclear decor. Gorgeous LILY HIMES sings, shimmering sequins and backed by a quintet.

AT THE BAR

Runyan, a regular, and one of the few white faces, opens Georgia's diary and flips to the end.

*B&W FLASH CUTS OF GEORGIA**Her eyes. Her smile. Impressions, abstract, fleeting.*

RESUME - THE FALL OUT

The BARTENDER refills Runyan's glass.

BARTENDER

My mamma used to say reading a lady's personal diary is bad form.

RUNYAN

Not just any lady, Cyrus. My wife.

BARTENDER

Still. Gonna be hell to pay.

RUNYAN

(sad)
Hell already took its cut.

BARTENDER

I meant Miss Lily.

Runyan looks up at him. Then at Lily, on the stage.

RUNYAN

It doesn't really concern her.

BARTENDER

Yeah, you two just keep pretending that.

Runyan closes the book. Lily's song ends, the audience cheers. She doesn't look Runyan's way.

BARTENDER

One more song in this set. You gonna stick around, face the inquisition?

Beat. Runyan slides off his stool.

RUNYAN

Tell her she sounds real good tonight.

BARTENDER

Real good don't cut it, for her.

RUNYAN

Perfect, then.

BARTENDER

Mmm. That's gettin' closer, okay. And I'll tell her you come down with a case of the cowards and had to skidaddle.

Lily's band starts in on a new song. Runyan catches her stare, on his way out. Neither one of them giving an inch.

EXT. GAYLORD HOTEL - NIGHT

Wilshire Boulevard gleams. Lily's song carries over --

INT. GAYLORD HOTEL - RUNYAN'S ROOM - NIGHT

He sits on the bed, reading the diary. The room is spartan, the only sign of Runyan's occupancy is a suitcase in the corner and an ORCHID on the dresser.

RED AND BLUE NEON pulses through the window.

Runyan puts the diary down, and stares, thinking, into the darkness.

FLASH - FROM HIS MEMORY:

The flyer from Georgia's, for the outdoor church --

CRASH CUT TO:

EXT. DRIVE-IN CHURCH OF THE COSMIC EVOLUTION - DAY

Daytime at a drive-in movie theater. Half-filled with cars parked and speakers hanging from the windows, listening to the jittery, wafer-thin voice of

HON. REV. DR. V.R. BAILY

who stands, dwarfed by the screen, on a raised platform, behind a modest podium, delivering his sermon:

BAILY

We are spawn of the unknowable. Under the sun and under the sky. Embraced by the eternal, at the mercy of the laws of the Universe. No more, no less.

PRETTY YOUNG GIRLS on bicycles weave through the cars, taking up the collection, pastel sundresses fluttering.

BAILY

Einstein says the religion of the future
will be a cosmic religion. Transcending
any personal God. And avoiding dogma and
theology ...

RUNYAN'S MORRIS

curls around the back row and drives to the CONCESSION STAND,
where worshippers have lined up to buy Cokes and Chili Fries.
Runyan gets out of his car, squints across the lot at

CLOSE - THE PODIUM - BAILY

A rumpled professor. Looks just like his picture on the
flyer. Tweed jacket with patches, bow tie, a trim beard.
Male pattern baldness, his comb-over razzed by the breeze:

BAILY

... based on a religious sense arising
from the experience of all things natural
and spiritual as a meaningful unity.

Cars honk. QUAVERING MUSIC from a melodrone. Engines
starting up.

Baily steps off the platform, his GIRLS fall in line behind
him like baby ducks, and they head for a silver TRAILER
office tucked behind the movie screen ...

... where Runyan is waiting:

RUNYAN

V.R. Baily?

BAILY

If this is about Georgia, I've already
given my statement to the police.

RUNYAN

-- I'm not a cop.

Runyan gives him a card, walks with him.

BAILY

(the card:)

Leong's Fresh Fruit and Produce?

RUNYAN

It's where I get my messages.

BAILY

Georgia typed for me, answered
correspondence, kept my files in order.
I didn't really know her that well.

RUNYAN
Communist?

BAILY
Excuse me?

RUNYAN
Or left-leaning. I heard she was a little pink.

BAILY
Who are you?

RUNYAN
I'm nobody. Just a guy asking questions.

Baily studies him. The girls study him.

BAILY
No you're not. Good day, Mr. Runyan --

RUNYAN
I've got a few more. Questions.

BAILY
No, I do not know who killed her.

Baily goes into the trailer and shuts the door.

RUNYAN
That was one of them, good guess.

Runyan moves to a window, SEES BAILY on the phone, agitated. Their eyes meet -- Baily pulls down a shade. The bicycle GIRLS staring doubtfully at Runyan.

RUNYAN
I liked his sermon. 'Spawn of the unknowable.' Pretty much sums up my current condition.

The girls move off. Runyan watches the lot empty of cars. Then saunters back toward the concession stand, and his Morris.

WINDOW OF THE TRAILER - MOMENTS LATER

Baily peers out again --

BAILY'S P.O.V. - THE DRIVE-IN EXIT

Runyan's Morris joins the queue of cars crawling out the gate. And disappears.

BEHIND THE TRAILER

Baily hightailing it for his two-tone Ford convertible.

WIDE - THE DRIVE-IN LOT

Baily's Ford goes the other way, to the entrance, where the keeper lifts the gate just in time for Baily's car to barrel through.

EXT. DRIVE-IN CHURCH OF THE COSMIC EVOLUTION - WITH RUNYAN

idling on a side-street, waiting for Baily to come curling down the entrance drive and merge into traffic.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE ARROYO SECO - A CHAIN LINK FENCE AND GATEHOUSE

Marking restricted property belonging to AEROJET LABORATORIES. Lots of warning signs, and some GUARDS who wave Baily through.

RUNYAN'S MORRIS

slows to a crawl, further back, watches the Ford disappear then makes a u-turn and heads back the way it came.

EXT. AEROJET LABORATORIES - THE PEARSON "BARN" - LATER

LOOKING DOWN into the arroyo, on a fat old BARN that's been converted into a rocket fuel test facility. Baily's Ford is parked outside, and he's arguing angrily with a golden-haired, roguishly good-looking SCIENTIST in an open lab coat.

This is DR. KIP PEARSON.

REVERSE - ON THE LIP OF THE CANYON - RUNYAN

Car pulled off a dirt road. PEERING DOWN with opera glasses through the security fence at the altercation below him.

RUNYAN'S P.O.V. - THE BARN, THE ARGUMENT (OPERA GLASS MATTE)

Baily apoplectic. SHOUTING. Pearson cool and indifferent. Runyan can only hear fragments:

BAILY

... what did you tell them?!

Pearson says something, muffled, inaudible. Baily lunges at him, and they begin to wrassle awkwardly -- Baily climbing on Pearson's back -- they go down in the dirt --

RUNYAN

Swell. A nerd rumpus.

RUNYAN

Considers the fence. Shrugs off his coat, throws it over the barbed wire -- then goes up and over like somebody who knows what he's doing --

THE PEARSON BARN - SAME TIME

-- Baily has a PISTOL. He's up on his feet, stumbling backward and aiming it at Pearson like somebody who doesn't know what he's doing --

IN THE HILLSIDE BRUSH - RUNYAN - SAME TIME

slip-sliding down to the argument --

THE PEARSON BARN - SAME TIME

Pearson is sweating, scared.

PEARSON

You're not going to shoot me, Vaughnie.

BAILY

No?! No?! You don't think so?!

PEARSON

No. Put it down. I'm the only one who can help you.

Baily lets the gun drop, limp, to his side.

IN THE WEEDS - RUNYAN

Arriving just as Pearson takes the gun, pockets it, and leads Baily back inside. Arm over Baily's shoulders.

Runyan moves past a big, parked DESOTO ... finds a window:

RUNYAN'S P.O.V. - THE BARN LABORATORY

The lab is a clutter of armatures holding beakers and flasks and distillation stations; ventilated hoods over lab tables, portable blackboards filled with equations, huge combustion chambers, and racks of chemicals.

Pearson talking to Baily, low, inaudible. Baily slumped on a stool, staring at the floor, like a scolded schoolboy.

Nodding. Nodding. Then he's up, out the door. Pearson just watches him.

RUNYAN

moves along the barn to the front, SEES Baily's Ford FISHTAIL away, back down the road. Runyan goes back to the window.

RUNYAN'S P.O.V. - THE BARN LABORATORY

Pearson is at a ventilator hood, wearing safety goggles. He turns suddenly, looks right out the window at --

SIDE OF THE BARN - RUNYAN

Steps back, into a puddle under a leaking spigot: SPLOOSH.

BARN - PEARSON

looks out where Runyan was just watching. Runyan's gone.

BEHIND THE DESOTO

Runyan waits until Pearson goes back to work. Then he moves around the car. He's got a handful of mud, and he packs it on one of the taillights before disappearing back into the bushes ...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AEROJET LABORATORIES - THE BIG BARN - DUSK

as Pearson locks up and heads to his big DeSoto.

EXT. ARROYO SECO - AEROJET GATEHOUSE - DUSK

Guards wave the DeSoto through.

CUT TO:

EXT. COLORADO STREET BRIDGE - PASADENA - DUSK

Pearson's DeSoto curls over the concrete bridge that spans the Arroyo Seco, heading east ... Runyan's Morris is a safe distance behind him ... the tell-tale mud-obscured taillight making his job easy ...

CUT TO:

EXT. HI-WAY HOST MOTOR HOTEL - ALTADENA - DUSK

DeSoto under the office awning. Pearson inside registering.

ACROSS THE STREET - RUNYAN'S MORRIS

He watches Pearson park and disappear inside Unit 19. Then puts his car in gear and drives to a better vantage point.

EXT. HI-WAY HOST MOTOR HOTEL - NIGHT

A light glows behind the curtained window of Unit 19. A TAXI CAB pulls into the parking lot and glides to the end.

SAME - ZOOMED (OPERA GLASSES MATTE)

A YOUNG GIRL gets out of the cab, pays the driver. Fire red party dress and matching shoes. Pearson opens the door. Sleeveless t-shirt and pants, no shoes. Cigarette holder. He takes the girl into his arms and kisses her, hard --

INT. RUNYAN'S MORRIS - SAME TIME

Runyan lowers his opera glasses and watches the couple disappear inside Unit 19.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HI-WAY HOST MOTOR HOTEL - UNIT 19 - LATER NIGHT

The window is dark.

INT. RUNYAN'S MORRIS - SAME TIME

Reading from Georgia's diary, in the light from a streetlamp. A car door SLAMS. Runyan looks up --

EXT. HI-WAY HOST MOTOR HOTEL - UNIT 19

The DeSoto's taillight glows red. The headlights switch on and the car comes tearing out of the parking lot --

INT. RUNYAN'S MORRIS

Runyan ducks down so they don't see him ...

CUT TO:

EXT. MULHOLLAND HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The curling road. The city sprawled out below. The DeSoto moves steadily, rocking on soft springs.

INT. RUNYAN'S MORRIS - HEADLIGHTS OUT - NIGHT

Further back. Runyan getting brief glimpses of the mud-marked DeSoto's taillights as it takes turns up ahead, then dips back into the mountain.

EXT. MULHOLLAND HIGHWAY - TURNOUT - NIGHT

The DeSoto SLOWS to take a sharp turn -- and suddenly the passenger door SWINGS OPEN and the YOUNG GIRL from the motel tries to leap out --

INT. RUNYAN'S MORRIS - SAME TIME

comes around the curve just in time to see the girl half-in, half out -- a man's arm holding her -- the DeSoto skidding to a halt on the dirt shoulder --

EXT. MULHOLLAND HIGHWAY - TURNOUT

Runyan's Morris stops safely short -- headlights BLAZE up on the young woman as she breaks free and crumples, crying, to the ground -- the DeSoto stops. Grinds into reverse --

RUNYAN

-- out of his car, sprinting to the girl --

-- She's younger than he expects, pretty, pale, sobbing, in a tattered fire red dress. She looks up at him, eyes wild with fear.

THE DESOTO

nearly hits him, coming back -- Runyan dodges it, grabs the driver's side doorhandle and throws it open --

-- to find agent Buddiger -- not Pearson -- behind the wheel, and agent Lime pressing a gun to Runyan's temple, from the back seat window:

LIME

I think somebody told you to stop
snooping, boy-o.

Buddiger SLAMS the door shut on Runyan's fingers -- trapping them -- BLINDING PAIN --

LIME

Interferring with important government
business.

-- the DeSoto starts forward, the car half-dragging Runyan.

LIME

A guy could get hurt.

HEADLIGHTS

flash across them. A car approaching on Mulholland. Runyan flails at the drivers' doorhandle, trying to free his hand.

LIME

Or get dead.

He GOUGES the barrel of the gun into Runyan's head -- cocks the hammer back --

RUNYAN'S FREE HAND

finds the doorhandle and works the latch --

MULHOLLAND - THE ONCOMING CAR

turns its flashing red bubble-light on:

BUDDIGER (V.O.)

Crap. Cops.

-- the LAPD patrol car cruises past, OFFICERS' faces pale, staring out at the surreal scene. Brake lights --

RESUME - THE DE SOTO

The driver's door gapes and Runyan is released -- just as LIME PULLS THE TRIGGER --

BANG!

Flash of the muzzle -- Runyan rolls away. The DeSoto takes off, tires spitting gravel --

RUNYAN

The bullet has creased his hairline. He gets to his feet, tucks his wounded hand away and hurries back to the girl.

THE LAPD PATROL CAR

makes a three-point turn to come back around --

RUNYAN AND THE GIRL

She recoils from him. Dress torn. Lipstick smeared like a big bruise.

RUNYAN

I'm not going touch you if you don't want me to. Can you get up?

Her head lolls around. Drugged. Can't stop crying.

RUNYAN

I'm just gonna help you up and into the car, we'll get you to a doctor.

He gently gets his hands under her arms and starts to lift -- but she lurches against him and holds on, sobbing --

WIDE - THE TURNOUT

Cops approach, wary. Runyan sits back, holding the crying girl, the city lights scattered below them like broken dreams.

FADE OUT.

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM - SUNRISE

Runyan, hand bandaged, SGT. COLE of vice, some hardened MALE COPS with nothing better to do ... and one scared, shamed, girl victim, JUDY, wrapped in a blanket, on a hard wooden chair by Cole's desk.

COLE

You a pro, Judy?

JUDY

I don't know what that means.

COLE

Sure you don't. You smell good. Lilac?

RUNYAN

She told you what happened. Who's the victim here?

COLE

She told *her* version. This is a serious charge she's making. A man's reputation is at stake. Situation like this, people sometimes, they see things ... different. It's like, what's he gonna say? Maybe she led him on. Maybe it was consensual. And then got a little rough --

JUDY

You think I asked for this?!

Her eye is bloody, her face bruised, her mouth swollen. Paez comes into the squad room, behind them, as --

COLE

You got the short red dress, the low-cut top. You're a looker, Judy -- by your own admission you took a cab to this man's motel room all dolled up ...

Judy's eyes go dead.

RUNYAN

What do the Feds say?

PAEZ

(right behind him)

Bureau says they don't know what you're talking about. There were no agents up on Mulholland last night. Or anywhere else.

Judy looks around, at the eyes of the other Cops, idly fixed on her. Measuring her. Judging her. They're not bad cops, just men of their time.

COLE

You really want to travel down this road?

Judy's voice barely audible:

JUDY

I just want to go home.

Cole nods.

INT. HALLWAY - SAME TIME

Runyan presses:

RUNYAN

He drugged her, he raped her, he roughed her up, and then called his government babysitters to come clean up the mess.

PAEZ

Were you in the room with them? No. Can you say positive what transpired between two consenting adults? You can't. You don't even know his name.

RUNYAN

The girl knows --

PAEZ

You and I both know this girl won't be pressing charges.

BEHIND THEM, THROUGH THE MOTTLED GLASS: a matron comes in and helps Judy up and away from Cole and his desk.

RUNYAN

There was a time when you boys actually believed in that motto, 'protect and serve' --

PAEZ

Yeah, well. That was before the Cold War gave the Federales a trump card.

(then)

This guy is marked special handling, what do you want from me? You think you can save this girl and make up for not saving your wife? You can't.

RUNYAN

Maybe not, but at least somebody gets saved.

PAEZ

The Feds are just doing their job.

RUNYAN

Yeah? The Fed who gave me the .38 haircut? Or the one who tried to drag me down Cahuenga Pass?

PAEZ

Lemme show you something --

He pulls Runyan across the hall and through a doorway labelled: EVIDENCE --

INT. EVIDENCE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Shelves of evidence behind locked chain link. A low table where items not yet booked are spread out and tagged, with paperwork attached --

PAEZ

While you were wasting your time harassing VIPs, we got a search warrant and tossed Baily's apartment.

Paez shows Runyan the gun box that was, when Runyan last saw it, under Georgia's bed. And now there's a gun inside.

RUNYAN

That's the box from under Georgia's bed.

PAEZ

Ballistics makes this gun for the murder weapon. Baily's prints are all over it.

RUNYAN

Baily barely knows which end of a gun to hold. And I saw the rocket scientist take that gat away from him.

PAEZ

Will you forget the scientist! He's off-limits. Baily killed your wife. We're gonna find him, and we're gonna fry him. The end.

He bangs the box down and goes back into the corridor.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Runyan following --

RUNYAN

Why would Georgia save news clippings of the Miller girl in her diary?

PAEZ

Oh for crying out loud --

RUNYAN

Just let me look at the Sara Miller case files --

PAEZ

What I think? Baily got Georgia pregnant. Bad p.r. for the preacher man. But she wouldn't get rid of it, so --
bing bang. He got rid of her.

RUNYAN

Georgia was a deliberate person. She wouldn't save something if it wasn't important.

PAEZ

Ninety percent of all murders are domestic in origin.

RUNYAN

Maybe there's a connection.

PAEZ

(losing it)
NOT EVERYTHING IS CONNECTED! Okay?

The door of the CHIEF OF DETECTIVES office opens and Lovely steps out ... with Pearson. Turning to shake hands with the Chief. Everybody smiling.

RUNYAN

(to Paez)
No?

He walks off, down the corridor, before they see him.

CUT TO:

EXT. PEARSON'S BARN - AEROJET - MORNING

The DeSoto pulls in and parks. Pearson gets out, jingling keys, and unlocks the front door --

INT. PEARSON'S BARN - CONTINUOUS

As Pearson comes in, whistling --

BAM!

Runyan steps out and PUNCHES him in the face, hard. Pearson reels -- Runyan HITS him again -- BAM!

RUNYAN

How does it feel, Doc? To be on the receiving end?

Pearson flailing miserably, throws a feeble counter and Runyan NAILS him so hard his legs go rubbery and he goes CRASHING BACK into a lab stand.

RUNYAN

Not so good, huh?

Pearson making a high-pitched noise, holding his bloody face, curled up, pathetic.

RUNYAN

Get up.

PEARSON

No.

RUNYAN

Get up.

PEARSON

No, you'll just hit me again.

A long beat. Runyan stares at the trembling man.

RUNYAN

I met Judy, last night, up on Mulholland. Remember Judy? I gotta say, I don't think she enjoyed your date very much.

PEARSON

Did you know that Oppenheimer is a communist sympathizer? Or 'fellow traveller' is the more delicate term. Not even Senator McCarthy can touch him. Father of the a-bomb. You know.

RUNYAN

You think you're that important to them?

PEARSON

(smug)
I know I am.

RUNYAN

How many other Judys have there been?

PEARSON

I don't know what you're talking about.
(realizing)
You must be the fruits and nuts man who was asking Baily questions about Georgia.

RUNYAN

That's right. The name is Runyan. Get up, my good hand's sore now. I'm done hitting you.

Runyan steps back. Pearson rises and lurches to a lab sink, where he runs water and splashes it on his face.

PEARSON

You're not supposed to be in here.

Pearson wipes his face. Presses a towel to his nose.

PEARSON

Do you think he shot her?

RUNYAN

I don't know. Do you?

PEARSON

He says no. I believe him.

(then)

If he was going to kill anyone, it would probably be me.

RUNYAN

And why's that?

PEARSON

I accused his girlfriend of stealing from me. Vaughn has taken exception to it.

RUNYAN

Girlfriend.

PEARSON

That's what I said.

RUNYAN

What'd she steal?

PEARSON

Baily and I were at Cal Tech together. Roommates, as a point of fact. We took ... well, slightly different career paths after graduation.

RUNYAN

I didn't know that Cal Tech had a religious studies department.

PEARSON

Science is the future of everything, Mr. Runyan.

Runyan waits. He doesn't believe any of this, but wants to see where Person will go with it. The arrogance returning:

PEARSON

Occasionally I throw fundraisers for the Church -- it's the least I can do for the man who got me through Calculus. Maths being my Achilles heel.

Pearson is gathering some things together, from the lab benches, then he heads for the back door out of the barn and gestures for Runyan to follow him.

PEARSON

The next morning, after one such occasion, some extremely important papers were missing from my study. Where Georgia had put the coats. Q.E.D.

RUNYAN

Could have been anyone.

PEARSON

Could have been. Except: I alerted security, who alerted the federal authorities, who intercepted a ransom demand from the girl which brought her in for questioning ...

EXT. BEHIND THE BARN - AN OUTDOOR TESTING YARD - CONTINUOUS

Pearson leads Runyan toward a giant aperture that holds a fixed firing cylinder rigged inside a hyper-cooled, frost-laced refrigerating device, and wired with ignition and blast baffles.

PEARSON

... where she informed them that my old school chum V.R. Baily was the dirty Commie who put her up to it. You can imagine how that made him feel.

RUNYAN

Stealing secret papers and selling them back to you.

PEARSON

Or to the Russians. It wasn't clear. You might want to step back a bit.

Runyan does, just in time, because Pearson triggers the ignition and the blast apparatus FIRES -- SPITTING FLAMES and making the whole rig SHUDDER for five harrowing seconds ... then it SPUTTERS out, AND THICK BLACK SMOKE is everywhere.

PEARSON

You didn't see that.

Pearson quickly stepping up with a FIRE EXTINGUISHER and blowing out spot fires, checking gauges and making notes:

PEARSON

Something else you wanted to ask?

RUNYAN

Gee. No. It's a crackerjack story, Kip. Thanks. Normally I have to grind that kind of detail out of people, but you, you just had it all cued up for me like a goddamn dissertation.

PEARSON

-- do I detect sarcasm?

RUNYAN

Do you?

A beat. It's been dawning on Pearson that Runyan is way smarter than he supposed.

PEARSON

Security checks in on the half hour -- as you know, they take exception to hired guns tenderizing their prime assets.

He heads back into the barn.

RUNYAN

Another sad girl turns up on Mulholland, next time I won't let you get up.

The back barn door SLAMS shut.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - LEONG'S GROCERY - MORNING

Johnny's spraying water on his vegetables as Runyan arrives.

RUNYAN

Is there a Chinese cure for moral indifference, Johnny?

LEONG

Eggplant.

Johnny shoots a warning look to the counter at Hal's, where Bailly sits hunched over a cup of coffee. Runyan crosses and slides onto a stool.

RUNYAN

Half of LAPD's looking for you. The other half's prowling for crullers.

BAILLY

(low, intense)
I didn't kill her.

RUNYAN

Cops found the murder weapon at your apartment. Guess whose prints on it?

Hal brings some coffee for Runyan.

HAL

You see where Ike says this new bomb will insure a generation of peace?

RUNYAN

I like Ike. I'd like to live in that world, where the h in H-bomb means happy, wouldn't you?

Hal grunts, drifts away.

BAILY

He's's setting me up. Pearson. Georgia was just my typist. *He* was the one who got her pregnant.

RUNYAN

Whoa-what?

BAILY

You gotta help me.

RUNYAN

Back up a square: who got who pregnant?

BAILY

Pearson. Got her pregnant. That's right. And then he killed her 'cause she wouldn't take care of the situation.

RUNYAN

That's funny. I know a cop whose seen the same movie, only you're the star of his version. No stolen plans?

BAILY

Will you listen to me? Stolen plans is what he wants everyone to think. He's untouchable, Pearson. See, I helped him move the body back to her apartment and I can prove he --

RUNYAN

(frowns, processing:)

You helped him. Hide her murder.

Runyan wills himself not to lunge at Baily and rip his throat out. Emotions raging behind the cool Runyan mask --

BAILY

Oh, our so-called friendship long ago
crossed into the realm of assured mutual
destruction.

RUNYAN

(what can he say?)

Oh.

BAILY

(lower, intense:)

I can prove he did it.

RUNYAN

-- tell it to the cops. I'll go with.

BAILY

They won't believe me. We need proof.

RUNYAN

We?

A boy in a coonskin cap runs from a boy in a dime store
Indian headdress. Cap guns and rubber tomahawk. Yi yi yi!

BAILY

I'm meeting Pearson tonight. Aerojet
Labs. The Barn, so. I get him talking,
you'll be my witness. Eight o'clock.

He slips off the stool and melts into the morning shoppers.
Hal clears their cups --

HAL

I guess you're payin' for your pal.

CUT TO:

INT. CENTRAL LIBRARY - NEWS ARCHIVE - DAY

A basement gallery of narrow aisles lined with drawers filled
with microfilm. Runyan waits at the main desk as an OLD
CLERK shuffles out with a couple of boxes of film.

MICROFILM READER - MOMENTS LATER

Runyan threads the coiled roll of microfilm into the spool of
the reader, turns on the SCREEN light and manually spins
through a years' worth of L.A. TIMES issues ...

ON THE SCREEN:

BLUR of headlines, pictures, text ... he slows, goes back and
forth until he finds the story he's looking for -- the same
one Georgia had clipped, about SARA MILLER.

SPIN:

Another story. She's still missing.

SPIN:

A final story. They found the body. Grainy B&W crime photos of men standing around something under a sheet in the Mohave.

TIGHT - TEXT

... "gruesome discovery" ... "loving parents" ... "her mother Agnes" ... "grief-struck neighbors in Pacoima" ...

CRASH CUT TO:

EXT. BLACKTOP - PACOIMA, CALIFORNIA - DAY

A two-lane highway lined with Almond trees and billboards advertising BEAUTIFUL NEW HOMES! Runyan's Morris hustles along ...

EXT. SMALL FARMHOUSE - DAY

Chickens in the yard scatter as the Morris pulls in. A sad-looking AGNES MILLER, younger than she looks, comes through a screen door wiping her hands on her apron.

Runyan gets out of his car.

RUNYAN

Mrs. Miller? My name is Runyan. I'm sorry for the intrusion, but I guess you don't have a phone.

AGNES

I guess I'm not a Rockefeller is what.

RUNYAN

Ma'am, I'm here to talk about your daughter. You can say no and send me packing.

AGNES

(wind knocked out of her)
Sara?

INT. FARMHOUSE - DAY

Runyan at the kitchen table, Agnes trying to find something to keep her busy, and distracted.

AGNES

They'll never find the monster who done it. I know that.

RUNYAN

Sometimes there's patterns, to what these guys do. They have habits, rituals -- police can connect the dots, and maybe --

AGNES

You mean, he'll kill another girl.

RUNYAN

Or try.

AGNES

I don't want that. Nobody else. No sir. Nobody else. When you lose someone you love ... do you know how that feels, to lose someone, Mr. Runyan?

Runyan says nothing. A long pause. The chickens. The wind. Tears in Agnes's eyes.

AGNES

It was wrong to let her go to Los Angeles. I couldn't ever say no to her. She was all goodness and light.

RUNYAN

She have a job waiting? Or was it Hollywood?

AGNES

Oh Lord. No. No. Sara was very spiritual. She become enamored of this preacher on the television and went to Los Angeles to be a bicycle altar-girl at the Drive-in Church of Cosmic Consciousness.

(faltering)

I thought God would protect her, but turns out it's a Science-based belief, and so God was turned the other way when my little doll got taken, and ...

(beat)

He wrote me a beautiful note, though.

RUNYAN

Who?

AGNES

The preacher. Just the most beautiful thing you've ever read, full of sorrow and regret.

Off Runyan ... as her words sink in ...

CUT TO:

EXT. CALIFORNIA STREET BRIDGE - DUSK

CLICK -- the streetlights come on, and glow.

TIME LAPSE:

NIGHT FALLS. Headlights. Runyan's Morris hurries across.

EXT. AEROJET LABORATORIES - THE PEARSON BARN - NIGHT

LOOKING DOWN into the arroyo, on the BARN.

REVERSE - ON THE LIP OF THE CANYON - RUNYAN

Car pulled off into the weeds, PEERS DOWN through the fence.

RUNYAN'S P.O.V. - THE BARN

Quiet. Baily's Ford is parked out front. No light from the Lab. After a moment Baily comes out, looks around. Nervous.

ON THE LIP OF THE CANYON - RUNYAN

Stands. Checks his watch. Starts to climb the fence.

EXT. THE PEARSON BARN - NIGHT

Baily pacing, looks up as Runyan comes slip-sliding out of the sage. Security lights drop white pools along the barn.

BAILY

I was worried you wouldn't come.

RUNYAN

Oh I wouldn't miss this for the world.

He flicks on a flashlight, goes inside.

INT. THE PEARSON BARN - CONTINUOUS

Baily crouching down, his flashlight beam aimed at the unfinished, hardwood floor.

BAILY

He shot her in here.

He pushes back a scrap of rug. Dark stains, but they could be from anything.

BAILY

She tried to get more money out of him.

RUNYAN

More?

BAILY

He paid her ten grand to take care of the pregnancy and go away, but she got greedy, come back, and asked for more.

RUNYAN

Greed was not one of Georgia's vices.

BAILY

How do you know?

He flicks the flashlight beam into Runyan's face, blinding him. Then out the door, into the darkness.

BAILY

He'll be here soon. You better hide.

RUNYAN

If you don't start telling me the truth, I can't help you --

Click. Lights out. SCENE GOES DARK. Runyan can barely see.

BAILY (O.S.)

I'm thirsty.

SOUND of water running. FOOTSTEPS scraping.

RUNYAN

I talked to Agnes Miller today. She said you wrote her a very touching note, after the discovery of her daughter's body.

Nothing from Baily. FAINT TICKING, a timer winding down --

RUNYAN

Sara Miller. Name ring a bell?

Nothing from Baily.

RUNYAN

She was one of your girls, Baily. Did you kill her? Or was it Pearson? Was he backing your church so he'd have pick of the litter?

A RATTLING NOISE on the other side of the lab.

Click. LIGHT: at the back door of the Lab, for an instant, Runyan SEES Baily with his flashlight aimed at the doorlock, trying to figure out why it won't open --

-- tick tick --

Looking back at Runyan with an expression of desperation -- then utter surprise -- and horror -- and regret --

-- Runyan wills himself up and SPRINT-LUNGES OUT THE FRONT DOOR because -- tick tick DING --

BOOOOOOOOOM!

FIRE and SMOKE -- FLAMES LEAPING toward the many beakers and vats of test fuel.

BOOOOOOOOOM!

Now the whole BARN EXPLODES.

EXT. THE PEARSON BARN - CONTINUOUS

Runyan is thrown clear. Covers up as wood and metal and glass and pyrotechnics of secret fuels cyclone around him like mad Chinese fireworks.

Finally dying out ...

... into embers and flames and rubble.

RUNYAN

sits up, dazed. Lucky to be alive.

FADE OUT.

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

INT. JAZZ CLUB FALL-OUT - CENTRAL AVENUE - DAY

Empty except for Runyan and Lily Himes, at the bar. Runyan's got bandages on his face and neck, cuts and nicks, both eyes bruised and hollow. Plus the splint on his hand.

LILY
Cops got their man.

RUNYAN
They think so. Paez thinks he was a
jealous lover, the Feds think he was a
commie spy.
(beat)
And everybody's pretty pleased with
themselves.
(beat, frustrated:)
It's all vapor trails.

LILY
What'd you get? Besides more scars.

RUNYAN
I got all these pieces that don't fit.
Old wives and rocket scientists. Babies,
blackmail and broken friendships ... and
a body out in the desert.

LILY
Not pieces, baby. Notes. You're just
trying to find a key to play them in.

RUNYAN
That's kind of poetic, Lily.

LILY
Nah, it's just bebop.

RUNYAN
Just. Like you and me? "Just" friends?
They look into each other. Searching. Lily sighs.

LILY
If you'da told me you had a wife, I
probably never would have given you a
second look. And we never would have got
together.

RUNYAN
And you wouldn't have had to break my
heart.

LILY
This world broke your heart, baby. If we
didn't live in it --

RUNYAN
-- I know. I know.

LILY
Did you love your wife?

B&W FLASH CUTS - GEORGIA

Eyes, lips, hands, the curve of her hip. Her smile --

RUNYAN (V.O.)
Yes I did.

RESUME - RUNYAN

lost:

RUNYAN
We were high school sweethearts. I made
her my war bride.

B&W FLASH CUTS - GEORGIA, RUNYAN, LONNIE

Younger. The wedding. Fragments. A dream.

RESUME - RUNYAN

staring at his hands.

RUNYAN
Two days after, we shipped out. Me and
my best friend -- who was also her best
friend. But ...

B&W FLASH CUT - LONNIE

In uniform. Grinning, devil-may-care.

RESUME - RUNYAN

remembering:

RUNYAN
Somewhere north of Anzio, on patrol,
Lonnie took a face-full of shrapnel meant
for me.

(beat)
I carried him ten miles back through
enemy lines to the mobile surgery unit.
To this day he thinks that *I* saved *him*.

(beat)
Well that was his ticket home. Georgia
met his train, he gave her all my

(MORE)

RUNYAN (CONT'D)
 letters. I stayed on, through V-E day,
 worked some in Berlin and Tokyo after.
 (beat)
 Came home after four years to find that
 my wife had fallen hard for my blind best
 friend.

B&W FLASH CUT - VA HOSPITAL CORRIDOR

*Runyan, captain's uniform and flowers, discovers Georgia and
 Lonnie laughing, kissing --*

RESUME - RUNYAN

Lily brushes the back of her hand across his cheek.

LILY
 I'm sorry.

RUNYAN
 She loved us both. But Lonnie needed her
 more. That's the kind of girl she was.

Beat.

LILY
 Sure. But what kind of guy does that
 make him?

Off Runyan --

CUT TO:

INT. V.A. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR

Runyan comes towards Lonnie's room. Empty wheelchair where
 the Korean War vet was.

INT. LONNIE'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Nobody here. Spotless. Runyan goes to the desk, moves the
 chair, opens the drawer and FINDS: a small reel-to-reel tape
 recorder and some LEARN FRENCH EASY lessons.

LONNIE
 Somebody in here?

Lonnie in the doorway. Runyan freezes.

LONNIE
 Runyan?

Lonnie comes in, confident -- Runyan moves away, around him,
 matching his footsteps to Lonnie's --

LONNIE
 Just because I can't see you doesn't --

WHAP. Lonnie runs into the desk chair that Runyan moved to get to the drawer. He wasn't expecting it. But now he knows someone is in his room.

LONNIE
What do you want?

Runyan backs out of the room.

LONNIE
Runyan.

INT. V.A. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR

Runyan walks back down the hallway --

LONNIE (O.S.)
RUNYAN!

INT. POLICE STATION - SQUAD ROOM

Runyan. Paez shaking his head, frowning, as:

PAEZ
You suggesting *Lonnie* killed her?

RUNYAN
No. I'm not.

PAEZ
Then what? Cuz I'm pretty busy here.

PAEZ
The murder weapon was Lonnie's gun. Army issue, Remington 1911-A1.

Beat.

PAEZ
So? There must've been millions of those 1911Als issued during the war.

RUNYAN
There's a nick on the handle from this fast-draw thing he practiced on deck *en route* to Algiers. I didn't mention it before because I knew you'd take it and run the wrong way.

PAEZ
Yeah. Insulting me is really working for you.

PAEZ
How did Lonnie's gun get into Baily's hand? What if Georgia knew that Baily had set Pearson up with the Miller girl?
(MORE)

PAEZ (CONT'D)

What if that's what the blackmail was about?

PAEZ

Luckily, here in the LAPD, we use what's called evidence to solve cases.

RUNYAN

It's gotta add up for me, Henry. All of it.

PAEZ

It adds up. You just don't like what the sum says about your so-called wife.

RUNYAN

You're right. I don't buy that Georgia had intimate relations with Baily or Pearson. Not her style. Neither was stealing secrets and selling them to communists.

PAEZ

Did I tell you the baby she was carrying was blood type O, same as Baily --?

RUNYAN

-- yeah, him and sixty percent of the world's population. But hey -- it fits with your story, so --

PAEZ

-- it fits the FACTS. It fits the facts.

Beat.

PAEZ

You hadn't seen her in seven years. A lot can change. Look at you.

RUNYAN

I'm the same. It's the world that's tilted.

PAEZ

Oh. Uh-huh. And, what, you, you're the guy's gonna put it straight?

Beat. Runyan strangely resolved:

RUNYAN

Yeah.

INT. JAZZ CLUB FALL-OUT - DUSK

The quintet launches into a wailing, double-time intro. MUSIC carries under --

EXT. EGYPTIAN THEATER - HOLLYWOOD - DUSK

Double feature: HELL AND HIGH WATER and THE GLEN MILLER STORY. A cigarette girl works the crowd in the courtyard. It's Judy, the young woman Pearson assaulted.

JUDY
Cigarettes? Free samples. Cigarettes?

She turns. Runyan.

RUNYAN
How much for the whole tray?

JUDY
Tell me he's dead. He tried it again, and the cops caught him and shot him dead.

RUNYAN
I can't.

JUDY
I came out here for the Rose Bowl. Michigan State, woo-hoo. Came out of an East Lansing winter, and it was so blue sky beautiful here, I stayed. I just ... stayed. I thought I'd meet Mr. Right. And, boom. Astrophysicist. I met him at church. At church. How could that turn out so wrong?

RUNYAN
(this confirms it:)
Under the sun, under the sky. You were an altar girl. At the Church of Cosmic Consciousness.

Judy nods, fights back tears.

JUDY
I want to hire you to kill him. Please? I've got over five hundred dollars in savings --

RUNYAN
It's not my area, I'm sorry. How much for the whole tray?

JUDY
Why?

RUNYAN
You're going home.

The MUSIC SURGES up, takes us --

INT. JAZZ CLUB FALL-OUT - NIGHT

Lily steps up to the microphone and begins to SING --

EXT. JUDY'S STUDIO APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

She comes out with a suitcase, Runyan puts it in the trunk of his car and they drive off --

INT. UNION STATION - NIGHT

Bustling, under the majestic, vaulted ceiling. Judy staring up at the departure board while Runyan buys her a one-way ticket on the California Zephyr back to Michigan.

INT. TRAIN PLATFORM - NIGHT

Runyan tips the PORTER who takes Judy's bag. She starts to get on the train, comes back, HUGS Runyan, and then disappears inside.

He walks away, as the train pulls out --

INT. JAZZ CLUB FALL-OUT - NIGHT

Lily finishes the verse, steps back -- DRUM SOLO --

EXT. UNION STATION - NIGHT

Runyan dropping quarters into a pay phone. Waits.

RUNYAN
(phone)
Lovely?

GO:

EXT. AEROJET LABORATORIES - THE RUINS OF THE BARN - NIGHT

A solitary figure picks through the rubble, beam of a flashlight stabbing down. Runyan.

EXT. ON THE LIP OF THE CANYON - SAME TIME

A security JEEP finds Runyan's Morris nosed into the brush.

EXT. AEROJET LABORATORIES - RUNYAN

Kneels down and digs with his hands. Flashlight clenched in his mouth. Searching.

HEADLIGHTS wash over him, coming down the access road, fast. Beams PINNING him to the rubble. He stands and shades the light from his eyes.

BLACK FEDERAL SEDANS

skid to a halt, and AGENTS hop out, with guns and rifles. Buddiger, Johnson, Lime ... and Lovely.

LOVELY

What's buzzin', cousin?

He comes forward, wary.

RUNYAN

Doesn't it at all bother you that some mad scientist's tall tale about stolen secret plans and Commies gets everyone in Justice a-quiver, and it's always you poor saps who have to make it hold up?

LOVELY

You don't know when to say when, do you?

RUNYAN

I've got a thing about loose ends.

Runyan aims his flashlight down again, and resumes rummaging. Sound of bullets chambered, guns cocked -- DRUM SOLO ends --

LIME

DO NOT MOVE!

LOVELY

(his guys)

They want any excuse to shoot you. Trespassing in a secret facility will do.

RUNYAN

Since when do they need an excuse?

Beat. Runyan keeps his hands up, and slips sideways, putting Lovely between himself and the guns. Lovely smiles faintly. But stays where he is.

RUNYAN

All this extra light helps, thanks.

He YANKS at something in the ruins. Stuck.

LOVELY

What are we looking for? The missing ten grand?

RUNYAN

A doorway.

LOVELY

Literally, or figuratively?

RUNYAN

Literally.

Lovely helps him -- it's big. Most of the barn's BACK DOOR, still in its shattered doorframe. Runyan stands it up, crooked.

RUNYAN

Pearson's a monster.

LOVELY

(sighs)

Okay, granted. He's a twisted soul, I'll give you that, but --

RUNYAN

And a murderer.

Beat.

LOVELY

Funny. Pentagon, Joint Chiefs, Congress -- Ike himself -- think he's one of the most important American scientific assets of the Cold War.

RUNYAN

I didn't say he wasn't smart. Hell, he out-conned a con-man sharp enough to start his own religion. Convinced Baily to lure me to the barn and blow me up in a "lab accident." Bring me in the front and then slip out the back --

FLASH CUT - BAILY

struggling frantically at the back door of the barn --

RESUME - RUNYAN

He bangs on the broken door. It won't budge from the frame.

RUNYAN

-- but the door ... was nailed shut.

FLASH CUT - BAILY

resigned to his fate -- staring back at us, hollow -- the INCANDESCENT detonation wipes the screen --

RESUME - RUNYAN

He drops the door. Lovely stares at it, shaken to the core.

RUNYAN

Baily never had a chance. Neither did Georgia. Or a girl named Sara Miller ... all under your careful watch, Ed.

LOVELY

Goddamn it, why did you show me this?! You think showing me this will change anything?!

RUNYAN

A man can dream.

LOVELY

Who put the red S on your chest?! You can't prove it was Pearson! You can't prove a goddamn thing!

RUNYAN

No I can't.

A long beat.

RUNYAN

That is the bitch of it, Lovely. Some men get blinded so others can see.

Another long beat. Lovely sags, numb.

LOVELY

I didn't know.

RUNYAN

You didn't want to know.

LOVELY

(bitterly sardonic)

Yeah, well.

(looks at Runyan)

At least he's *our* monster, huh? Isn't that what they say?

Lovely jams his hands in his pockets and starts to walk back to the cars, waving the headlights off. Preferring the darkness.

SCREEN GOES BLACK.

ACT FIVE

FADE IN:

INT. MUSEUM OF SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY - DAY

A media event. Aerojet logos everywhere, and Pearson behind the podium, flanked by shit-grinned AEROJET EXECUTIVES and well-fed PENTAGON BRASS --

PEARSON

... for years the problems of burning High Energy Fuels in rocket engines has stymied us. At stake was, quite literally, the future of mankind, as Democracy faces down the Red Menace.

Applause. Behind folding chairs filled with PRINT REPORTERS and DIGNITARIES, to one side of the massive TELEVISION CAMERAS in the back ... Runyan. Grim, waiting.

PEARSON

Aerojet Zip Fuel means now our ICBMs can soar farther and higher, new life for the XF-108 Rapier and the BOMARC ramjet projects, and our glorious B-29s will have greater flexibility to rule the skies and protect our nation and its allies with a thermonuclear, h-bomb arsenal second to none.

APPLAUSE. Pearson flashes a winning smile. A GENERAL pats him on the back. FLASHBULBS POP. A question shouted:

REPORTER

Elis Mankiewicz of Cal Tech says this will put you on the short list for Nobel Prize in Chemistry, Dr. Pearson. Care to comment?

PEARSON

I would never disagree with Dr. Mankiewicz on matters of pure scientific reasoning.

Laughter. More APPLAUSE as Pearson says 'thank you' and steps away from the microphones.

FLASH - SERIES OF STILLS

Pearson posing: with the Generals, with Aerojet executives, with the Mayor, with a PRETTY GIRL putting a CIVIC MEDAL around his neck while his hand drifts down to her ass --

MOVING - WITH PEARSON

as he makes his exit. Escorted by Lovely. Well-wishers pressing in. Touch of hands, vague smiles.

And then Runyan, matching stride with them:

RUNYAN

What's the zip fuel death toll now, doc?
Two? Three, if we count Sara Miller?

(off Person's glare)

Sara Miller, yeah -- one of your motor
hotel trysts gone wrong. That's what
this was all about. Georgia saw you
recruit from Baily's altar girls, one of
the perks of being his rainmaker -- saw
Sara Miller around the drive-in -- and
then her pictures in the paper, story of
a murder-kidnap ... and Georgia puzzled
it out. How'm I doing?

PEARSON

(to Lovely)

Make him go away.

Lovely glides across to intervene, as:

RUNYAN

Georgia hit you up for hush money. You
told the Feds it was about secret
documents, because the murder of a girl
might be a hard pill for even them to
swallow, no matter how many bombs you
build them.

PEARSON

Tall tales.

LOVELY

C'mon, Guy, let's take a
hike.

Runyan evades him --

RUNYAN

You killed Georgia to shut her up.

LOVELY

Runyan, that's enough --

Lovely grabs Runyan and Runyan grabs Pearson and they all
spin to a halt.

RUNYAN

-- And Baily, when he got twitchy. And
you just missed with me.

PEARSON

You're a pointless little man. A speck
of dust in the vastness of known space.

RUNYAN

Thank you.

PEARSON

And even if what you say was true, what can you do about it, Mr. Runyan? Welcome to the Age of Science. Big men, big ideas. The rules don't apply to us.

(biting)

You, my friend, your 'wife' -- any number of pretty trifles I may cast in my considerable wake ... just don't matter.

Runyan LUNGES at him, takes a wild swing and misses. A SCUFFLE ensues, Lovely slamming Runyan back into the wall, Pearson backing away, rattled but sneering:

PEARSON

I want to press charges. I want him arrested.

Lovely struggles with Runyan.

LOVELY

Let it go. Let it go, Runyan. It's about bigger weapons and better death. All we can do is duck and cover.

Runyan sags. They watch Pearson slip out a side door --

EXT. SIDE COURTYARD - CONTINUOUS

Formal gardens line a stone sidewalk. Sculpted trees sway in a warm breeze. Pearson stops to light a cigarette. Flick the match away. Squints up into another glorious day --

BANG!

A pop like a firecracker.

A small caliber bullet punches through Pearson's head and he drops like a rag doll. Judy stands over him, numb, sobbing, with the smoking gun.

Runyan and Lovely rush out -- Runyan strips the gun from her, takes the crying girl in his arms while Lovely checks his rocket man.

RUNYAN

I put you on a train.

JUDY

Track goes both ways.

LOVELY (B.G.)
Holy cow ...

BANGBANGBANGBANG!

Runyan empties the .22 revolver into the sky. INSIDE: anyone thinking of coming out just the scrambles for cover.

LOVELY
What are you doing?!

RUNYAN
Buying us ten seconds. She won't get a fair shake, Ed. You know she won't.

They stare at each other. Sirens. Lovely sakes his head. Footfall of COPS coming --

LOVELY
Aw, for the love of --

RUNYAN
... five, four, three ...

LOVELY
You gonna always want your stories to have a happy ending?

RUNYAN
(shrugs)
Can't have a Cold War if the whole world is ice.

Runyan offers the gun. Lovely takes it.

LOVELY
Gee, I wonder who killed him.

Cops BURST onto the scene from inside and outside -- Lovely slips the .22 in his pocket and holds up his badge --

LOVELY
FBI, gentlemen. Form a perimeter ... the shooter is still at large --

-- Runyan hustles the girl away -- gets lost in the chaos as REPORTERS and RUBBERNECKERS press out through the doors -- FLASHBULBS and the dull roar of breaking news --

CUT TO:

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - LATE AFTERNOON

Quiet. A small funeral. Lonnie in a chair, central, edge of the grave. Surrounded by a few friends.

INT. GEORGIA'S APARTMENT - LATE AFTERNOON

Runyan in a chair, drinking scotch. Motionless. Listening to an Lp on her record player. Diary on a side table.

All the furniture's been re-arranged.

EXT. FOREST LAWN CEMETERY - LATER AFTERNOON

The mourners dispersing. Lonnie shakes hands, accepts condolence. Lily steps up, whispers something. Lonnie frowns. She walks away ... but waits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. GEORGIA'S APARTMENT - DUSK

Cool darkness. Runyan hasn't moved. But his glass is empty. No music. A car horn HONKS.

EXT. COURTYARD - DIABLO BONITA APTS. - DUSK

A convertible Cadillac parked beyond the archway. Lily at the wheel, Lonnie climbing out. White cane. Sensing Runyan:

LONNIE
How many steps?

RUNYAN
Five.

Lonnie swings his cane, finds the stairs, and comes up into the courtyard, counting. Runyan meets him and offers an arm.

RUNYAN
How's your French coming?

LONNIE
Okay, spit it out, Guy. Don't be a jerk.

RUNYAN
Was it gonna be Paris or just some parley-ing protectorate? Georgia had a ticket and a passport and ten thousand bucks. You never broke up, Lonnie.

They're at the open door to Georgia's apartment. Runyan goes in, Lonnie stops on the threshold.

LONNIE
I told you, she did to me what she did to you. I'm damaged goods. There was no future for us.

INT. GEORGIA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

Runyan back in the shadows. Ronny hesitates at the doorway.

RUNYAN
You're lying. The baby was yours.

LONNIE

(snaps)

Hey, you surrendered the high ground seven years ago! You ran away, Guy! You ran away, instead of staying and fighting for her --

Lonnie starts into the apartment, but

WHACK.

He BUMPS into a chair he doesn't expect to be there -- reels back and KNOCKS a FLOOR LAMP crashing down.

RUNYAN

I didn't run, I left. And this apartment was all set up for a blind man until I moved it around about an hour ago.

Lonnie is quiet.

RUNYAN

I got out of your way, both of you. So you could have what I had lost.

LONNIE

But you wouldn't divorce her. She thought that meant something.

RUNYAN

No.

(beat)

Or maybe it did. I'm stubborn. And I have feelings. I'm sorry.

A pause.

RUNYAN

But ... the blackmail.

LONNIE

What about it?

RUNYAN

Georgia's mind didn't work that way. If she thought Pearson had hurt a girl she would have gone to the cops.

LONNIE

(bitter)

And the cops would have done nothing.

RUNYAN

Probably not. But the blackmail ... that was your idea. Soup to nuts.

Lonnie says nothing. He finds a chair, sits. Runyan takes the diary off the table and puts it into Lonnie's hands. This may be the hardest thing he's ever had to do.

RUNYAN
Georgia's diary.

LONNIE
I can't read this. Why --

RUNYAN
I thought it might give me a clue to what happened, with me and her -- but, no sir, it's all major key, as Lily would say: upbeat, happy, eyes forward. On you.
(sad:)
It's all on you.

B&W FLASH CUTS OF GEORGIA

Eyes. Smile. Hand reaching out ... to Lonnie's face --

RESUME - GEORGIA'S APARTMENT - LONNIE

Tears streaming down.

LONNIE
We had no money, and a family on the way. Look at me! The broken man! I made a bad decision, okay, but I didn't --

RUNYAN
-- you did. Her blood's on your hands. And I'm guessing you have the missing ten grand, so don't kid yourself.
(beat)
Pearson balked. Georgia got scared. She was calling me 'cause you were part of the problem.

He puts his hat on, tilts it against the bloody, dying sun streaming through the window. Lonnie sits in darkness.

LONNIE
You here to pass judgement on me?

RUNYAN
No. I came to say goodbye to my wife. The cops have some questions, though.

Then SEE Paez, peering in from outside, in the courtyard. A couple of LAPD UNIFORM POLICEMEN with him.

RUNYAN
Ready?

SCREEN GOES BLACK.